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STUDIES IN ADULT EDUCATION

CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS,
LYCEUMS,
CHAUTAUQUAS.

STUDIES IN ADULT EDUCATION

THESE five studies were undertaken in connection with the general efforts which the Carnegie Corporation is making toward improved education in the United States. The first four were made by investigators under the auspices of the Corporation, the fifth by a Commission of the American Library Association.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG WORKERS. *By Owen D. Evans.*

THE UNIVERSITY AFIELD. *By Alfred L. Hall-Quest.*

CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS, LYCEUMS, CHAUTAUQUAS. *By John S. Noffsinger.*

NEW SCHOOLS FOR OLDER STUDENTS. *By Nathaniel Peffer.*

LIBRARIES AND ADULT EDUCATION. *A Study by the American Library Association.*

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS,
LYCEUMS,
CHAUTAUQUAS

BY
JOHN S. NOFFSINGER

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PREFACE

THIS book presents the findings of an investigation made at the instance of the Carnegie Corporation of New York as part of a larger survey of adult education in the United States. It goes without saying that no survey of adult education would be adequate that did not take into account the vast machinery which exists for instruction by correspondence and, in lesser degree, for instruction and entertainment in the form of lectures and concerts under the auspices of Chautauquas and lyceums. Of the adults in this country who attempt to continue their education in any way the great majority do so by correspondence or by attendance at lectures.

In dimensions, though hardly in other respects, these are the main strands in adult education. Moreover, they have this in common, that both are the product of the broadening out of education from within university walls that took place in the last century. The university has gone out to the people and in doing so has taken academically unorthodox paths. Other agencies of education have followed in its steps, the largest being the lyceum and, later, the Chautauqua, and then the school by mail. It is not inappropriate that these latter be reviewed in the same study, it

being understood, however, that they are entirely separate agencies, having no relation to each other either in aim or method. The two parts of this book are to be regarded as separate units.

The correspondence schools treated in the present work are exclusively those which are privately owned and organized for profit, as distinguished from the extension correspondence departments of the universities. The latter have been examined in another volume in this series which takes up university extension as a whole.

JOHN S. NOFFSINGER.

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**CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS,
LYCEUMS,
CHAUTAUQUAS.**

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PART ONE

CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

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CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

WHEN the university stepped out of its monastic seclusion in the last century and lent the weight of its authority to the concept that education was communicable outside university walls and without academic atmosphere, it was only a matter of time before attempts would be made to give instruction by correspondence. When once the English universities, stirred by the zeal of a few individuals, instituted what has since become known as university extension and sent lecturers to address distant classes of laymen in non-scholastic language, it was only the next step to send out the lecturers' material in written form to those who could not attend lectures. The university itself did not take this step, but it had marked out the course.

The beginnings of education by correspondence are not difficult to trace. The first formal attempt to give lessons without personal contact in fact antedated the first lectures by James Stewart, Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, in 1867, which marked the beginning of

university extension. In 1856 Charles Toussaint, a Frenchman teaching his native language in Berlin, and Gustav Langenscheidt, a German writer and member of the Society for Modern Languages in Berlin, combined to found a school for the teaching of languages by correspondence. At first only French was offered, later English and other languages were added. Their plan was to send each student a monthly printed letter containing drill in grammar, exercises in conversation and instalments of a continued story in the language taught. Beneath each word of English, for instance, was a phonetic rendering of its pronunciation and beneath that its translation into German. Following this was a translation of a German passage into idiomatic English. The student was urged to give himself constant drill in pronunciation aloud and was expected to forward a written recitation each month to the instructors, by whom it was gone over and returned with corrections, comment and further suggestions. The Toussaint-Langenscheidt method, as it is still known, has not varied much to the present day in the teaching of foreign languages by correspondence.

The real development of correspondence instruction came only after the popularization of university extension and then not in Europe but in the United States. In 1873 an organization was formed calling itself The Society to Encourage Studies at Home. It sought to stimulate the formation of home study groups, prepared guides to reading and conducted a regular

correspondence with members. Failure to adapt instruction to the ability and requirements of the students soon caused the society to suspend. Ten years later a Correspondence University, consisting of an association of instructors from various colleges and universities, was founded at Ithaca, New York, stating as its purpose, "to supplement the work of other educational institutions by instructing persons who from any cause were unable to attend them." The following classes were enumerated as those the association hoped to interest.

- "(1) Persons engaged in professional studies which can be taught by correspondence.
- (2) Graduates doing collegiate or advanced work.
- (3) Under-teachers in the various schools and colleges.
- (4) Those preparing for college, either by themselves or at schools where instruction is not given in all branches.
- (5) Members of cultivated families that are obliged to live in remote localities.
- (6) Officers and men in the United States army and navy.
- (7) Persons who intend to try any of the civil service examinations.
- (8) Young men and women in stores and shops or on farms who desire to learn but cannot leave their labors to attend school; and finally

those in any walk of life who would gladly take up some study under competent private guidance."

The new "university" was widely acclaimed by laymen. The following editorial appeared in *Harper's Weekly*, October 27, 1883:

"A new and interesting scheme in higher education has been recently organized which is well worthy general attention. For some years there has been a very successful association in Boston for the direction of private reading. Persons in every part of the country who wish to follow at home a general or a special course of reading are advised by letter as to the books to take up and the methods to pursue. It is obvious that this plan is susceptible of wider application, which has been experimentally tested. A college professor has conducted by correspondence the mathematical studies of advanced pupils, and with such satisfactory results that thirty-two professors in various colleges, from Harvard University in the East to the Johns Hopkins University at the South and the University of Wisconsin at the West, have united to form what is called for convenience the Correspondence University for the purpose of instruction by correspondence. The word 'university' applies to the range of studies, which embraces a great number of branches, rather than to the organization, which is not chartered and has no authority to confer degrees."

For a variety of reasons the Correspondence University nevertheless soon died a natural death, but meanwhile another agency in a totally different field was unconsciously laying a lasting foundation for the correspondence school. This, strangely enough, was the Methodist camp meeting. The camp meeting had evolved from the occasional religious revival conducted by circuit riders for the impermanent settlements in the westward migrations to which so many phases of our social life can be traced. In parts of the country where the moving frontier had left permanent settlements the revivals were held at fairly regular intervals and were attended by whole families coming from within a large radius and living in tents for the duration of the meeting. These were quite literally camps, and they tended in more populous regions to take on all the characteristics of institutions. They were held at some favorably located place year after year. One such place was Fair Point, New York, on Chautauqua Lake. To this camp meeting in 1873 came two unusual men—the Rev. John H. Vincent and Lewis Miller, the one an enthusiastic Sunday school worker, with energy, ideas and a resourceful personality and the other a substantial manufacturer of farm machinery from Akron, Ohio, interested in education and religious work. They became imbued with an idea first proposed by Silas Farmer in 1870, that a Sunday school institute be established on the camp meeting plan.

The idea was proposed to the managers of the Chautauqua Camp Meeting Association and favorably received. The first Sunday School Teachers' Assembly was therefore held in 1874, "to utilize the general demand for summer rest by uniting daily study with healthful recreation and thus render the occasion one of pleasure and instruction combined." Study was at first confined to the routine training of Sunday school workers for the Methodist Episcopal church. But the project proved so successful that other denominations united in the Assembly, attendance increased and soon there was a call for a broader program. One by one more features were added. There were popular lectures, concerts, readings, social entertainments, to all of which the public was invited. Thus was founded the chautauqua movement, as we shall see in Part II, but here we are interested in the development of what was only a subsidiary activity.

In 1879 the School of Languages was organized at Chautauqua by a young professor of Hebrew from Yale, Dr. William Rainey Harper, who later became president of the University of Chicago. When the summer session was over a number of students who wanted to continue studying languages during the winter asked Dr. Harper to outline a course of study and agree to help them with advice by mail. He did so, but the loose arrangement did not work satisfactorily. It served, however, to emphasize a need and point a way. Two years later the plan was again taken up,

but this time with a fee of \$3 per course in order that instructors might be engaged to do the work satisfactorily. The fee proved to be too small to recompense instructors for their time and in 1883 it was raised to \$10 per course, instructors being held responsible for sending assignments to students at regular intervals instead of waiting until called upon for assistance. This proved successful and correspondence was adopted as the method of instruction by Chautauqua. The following plan of instruction, given in the Chautauqua Assembly Herald of August 8, 1882, illustrates the method used for all courses and is of interest as being the first systematic plan for correspondence instruction formally announced in this country:

"To assist students of the French language to overcome the idiomatic and other difficulties of interpretation, as well as to acquire general facility in French, it is proposed to organize a French Circle, for regular and systematic home study, to be directed through the mail by Professor Lalande.

"A free and full use of the French language involves (1) the art of reading; (2) the art of hearing; (3) the art of speaking; (4) the art of writing. The first and last of these, that may be called sub-arts, are peculiarly suitable for home study. The hearing and the speaking should constitute the main business of the session of the school at Chautauqua. At the outset of the study there are difficulties to be overcome that oral

instruction only can properly meet, and when the student has gained the ability to read French readily, he must hear the language spoken to cultivate his ear before he can make any profitable advance toward speaking it. Oral instruction is thus valuable at the commencement of the study and indispensable at a later stage, but there is a large and intermediary space in which the proposed circle may be most profitably employed. To this end it is intended to furnish by mail, weekly, to each member certain exercises comprising a definite amount of reading, translating and idiomatic and grammatic expounding, to be performed by the member and mailed to the professor. These exercises will be corrected and returned to the student, with notes and suggestions adapted to his individual needs. The course of exercises will begin October 1st and end May 31st. This series of graduated exercises will carry the student over all the important difficulties in the language, the required reading, etc., will insure to the faithful student such attainments in the French language as will fit him to profit fully thereafter by the most advanced instruction in class or under living teacher. Terms of membership, \$1.00 per month, to be remitted to Professor A. Lalande, Louisville, Ky., with the first exercise of each month."

It should be noted that while the work bore the name of Chautauqua, it was really in the hands of individual instructors, who conducted the correspondence and received all the fees. There was no organiza-

tion or uniformity of program and the officers of the Assembly exercised no supervision over the work. Nevertheless it continued with success and on a high level until 1900, when in a readjustment in Chautauqua policy and program all correspondence work was dropped. But in the meantime correspondence had taken root elsewhere. When Dr. Harper became president of the University of Chicago in 1892 he established at once a correspondence division of the department of extension as a result of his Chautauqua experience. From Chicago the idea spread to other institutions and today the greater part of the work of university extension divisions is by correspondence.

The correspondence school as we know it today comes down from one other source of an entirely different nature. In the latter part of the 1880's Thomas J. Foster, proprietor and editor of the Mining Herald, a daily newspaper published at Shenandoah, in the coal mining district of eastern Pennsylvania, began to study for himself the causes of the numerous mine accidents with their appalling wastage of human life. He became convinced after some investigation that the principal reason was the ignorance of mine owners, superintendents and workmen alike. He determined to do his share as an editor to remedy this condition. He began the publication of a column called "Questions and Answers" dealing with mining problems. When a law was passed in the state legislature requiring

mine foremen to pass an examination "in the laws of mine ventilation, safe methods of mining and the means of controlling dangerous natural phenomena incidental to coal mining," Mr. Foster republished and circulated foreign books on the prevention of mine accidents and expanded his column to deal with the questions asked by the Mine Examining Board and the inquiries from others which were coming in ever increasing numbers.

The interest aroused called for something more systematic and in 1891 Mr. Foster had prepared under his direction a course covering the subject of coal mining, mine surveying, mine machinery, etc. This was the most general kind of survey, but the response it won from all men in the industry from those in the pits to superintendents led to the preparation of a more extended course and by the middle of 1892 there was an enrollment of more than a thousand. Inquiries came in for information on other subjects from machinists, engineers, draftsmen and others employed in the mines and associated industries. The preparation of these courses followed almost automatically, the curriculum expanded ever wider to include all fields and thus was established the International Correspondence Schools of Scranton, Pa., the largest and best known of the correspondence schools. Now, less than forty years later, it offers more than 300 courses and more than 2,500,000 students have been enrolled on its books. The school's growth is best illustrated by

the figures showing total cumulative enrollments at different periods:

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1891..... | 115 |
| 1895..... | 10,105 |
| 1900..... | 251,310 |
| 1905..... | 853,773 |
| 1910..... | 1,363,700 |
| 1915..... | 1,802,251 |
| 1920..... | 2,271,193 |
| 1923..... | 2,580,362 |

The school is incorporated under the laws of the state of Pennsylvania, has no endowment or bonded indebtedness, and has paid its stockholders satisfactory dividends over a long period of years, with the exception of an occasional year. The financial success of this initial venture into the field of technical and vocational education by correspondence has led literally hundreds of others to invade the same field, only a few of them, however, having a similar success.

CHAPTER II

THE PRESENT GENERAL SITUATION

BEFORE proceeding to a detailed examination of private correspondence schools, their problems and methods, it may be well to take a general view of the situation as it exists now. As indicated at the close of the last chapter, there has been a rapid multiplication of schools, with an enormous increase in the number of students. We have seen also that this has come naturally out of industrial conditions and that in the pioneer correspondence school vocational and technical training has been the line of development.

Since the period in which the correspondence school became established was also the period of prodigious industrial development in the United States, the direction correspondence school instruction has taken is not difficult to explain. In this period a new technology was applied to the processes of production. The application of new machinery demanded new training for workmen, a new concept of organization for executives. Production has become more technical and simultaneously business has become more complicated. For the industrial worker and the business man, if either is to succeed in elevating himself from

the ranks, far more of preparatory training, of specialist training, is required than ever has been required of men at their work before.

Where were they to get it? The institutions of higher education clung until recently to the humanistic tradition. Technological schools were few and widely separated. Public institutions of education were ill-equipped in material and personnel to give such training. They were handicapped further by traditional methods suited only to the teaching of adolescents. Both the university and the school have begun their readjustment, but institutions move slowly and needs were pressing. New agencies were found, all the more quickly because the demand promised profits. The element of profit, however, cannot modify the fact that this agency was necessary and that it met a need which no other agency could or would satisfy at the time.

There is no official list of private correspondence schools because there is no method of registration, official or unofficial, but careful examination has resulted in the compilation of a list of 300 active private correspondence schools; probably there are fifty more. New schools are founded every year; at least a fourth of the 300 now listed were founded in the last five years. These are organized as a rule by men who were at one time salesmen or minor officials of the older, well established and prosperous schools. Seeing the possibilities of quick and easy profits if certain tactics

were adopted, these men have decided to make the most of them for themselves.

The number of new students annually enrolled in these schools varies greatly. Some will have not more than 100 new students a year, while two or three, whose advertising, sales and promotion budgets amount to \$1,000,000 or more each, may enroll 100,000 or more a year. Most schools carefully guard their statistical data, but judging from 127 schools whose enrollment figures were available, it is estimated that there were approximately 1,500,000 new students enrolled in the private correspondence schools in the United States in 1924. If we remember that large numbers who were enrolled in the previous year were still engaged on their course, we see that the number of students being instructed by correspondence in the year 1924 was between 1,750,000 and 2,000,000. In other words, four times as many persons were studying by correspondence with privately owned schools as there were in all the resident colleges, universities and professional schools combined. Further: on the basis of the reports obtained from the same 127 schools it may be estimated that the sum of \$70,000,000 is received annually in tuition fees by these schools, or as much as is spent to maintain the public schools of fourteen of the smaller states in the Union. The magnitude quantitatively of the correspondence school needs no demonstration.

Few courses that are offered by any resident school

are not likewise offered, at least in name, by some correspondence institution. Roughly speaking, all the subjects offered by correspondence schools may be grouped in three classifications:

1. *Cultural and Liberal Arts.* This includes subjects offered in public schools, high schools and colleges, with the addition of music. This group represents about five per cent of the work in the field of correspondence. Some of the schools catalogue hundreds of courses in this group—one which was recently suppressed by the United States postal authorities catalogued 867 different courses. But there is also some good work offered in this field, even if most of it must be called inferior.

2. *Technical and Vocational Other Than Business.* There is a very wide range of subjects and schools in this group, with an equally wide range in thoroughness of preparation of courses and methods of instruction. In this group are such subjects as Auto Mechanics, Drafting, Engineering, Home Economics, Interior Decorating, Librarianship, Millinery, Navigation, Optics, Photography, Sign Painting, Watchmaking, etc. This group represents approximately 40 per cent of the entire field.

3. *The Business Group.* This group is almost equal in size to the technical and vocational group and enrolls approximately 40 per cent of all correspondence students. This group is divided into five branches

- (a) Production Problems, which includes such courses as internal organization, management, efficiency, etc.
- (b) Finance, which includes different forms of ownership, banking, collections, methods of raising capital, investments and speculation, interpretation of business statistics, business cycles.
- (c) Marketing and Distribution, which includes advertising, salesmanship, sales administration, retail merchandising, mail order merchandising.
- (d) Transportation and Traffic, which includes traffic management, ocean and foreign trade, export procedure, consular invoices, custom house regulations, freight rates, claims, etc.
- (e) Accounting.

4. *Personal Efficiency.* This group represents approximately the remaining 15 per cent of the correspondence field. In it are to be found such courses as Personal Efficiency, Applied Psychology, Memory Training, Public Speaking, Diet, Physical Training.

Such is the scope of education by correspondence in the United States, again noting that this does not include the correspondence work offered by the universities or the courses offered to officers and enlisted men in the United States Army, Navy and Marine Corps under government auspices, with a total enrollment in 1925 of 52,000. As a matter of record it should be added that the United States is not alone in the development of instruction by correspondence, although it has gone furthest. This is especially true in the

other English-speaking countries. The British Isles and Dominions governments have given official support as well as encouragement.

It now remains to examine the correspondence schools and the work they give in some detail. As we have seen, more persons in the United States are affected by these schools than by any other agency of education excepting only the grade schools. It is pertinent to inquire what these influences are and how they are exerted.

CHAPTER III

KINDS OF CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

THERE are as many kinds of correspondence schools as there are schools. No classification has ever been made by Federal or state governments or by the schools themselves. There is no standard for a basis of classification. There is no definition of what is a correspondence school, with schools classified according to whether they meet the qualifications implied in the definition. Practically speaking, each is a rule unto itself, and each may adopt its own code of ethics and practices and call itself a correspondence school.

No serious attempts have ever been made to unify the interests of the schools or to meet common problems with unified and co-operative effort. There have been certain local attempts. Schools in Chicago and Washington, D. C., have tried to organize locally. Also a number of schools offering courses in the liberal arts and sciences, together with certain Negro schools and other struggling resident institutions not able to meet the requirements of the regional standardizing agencies, have formed what they call the "National Association of Colleges and Universities." To date, however, very little has come of any of these efforts.

As this is being written a more serious effort is being made on the part of the larger and more reputable institutions to take common action which may lead to the establishment of standards, but it is too early to write of this effort. To the present it may be said that there is hardly any community of interest among the large body of correspondence schools beyond the fact that their business is conducted by mail. Actually many of them offer but one course of study—Auto Mechanics, Beauty Culture, Lettering, Psycho-Analysis, etc. How can they meet on a common basis, even if they wanted to?

Perhaps one of the best descriptions of what correspondence instruction is has been given by the United States Bureau of Education (Bulletin No. 10, for 1920). It follows:

“As ordinarily applied in correspondence study, the method consists of the assignment by the instructor of definitely planned work, the writing out by the student of the written lessons, and the suggestions and assistance upon points where the student needs such special help. The student is tested on the whole of every lesson. He not only recites the entire lesson, but reduces it to writing, so that an error may be corrected. The criticism of the instructor is also clearly and definitely written, no slip-slop or evasive work, no bluffing is possible for student or instructor.”

It should be added that this is perhaps a description of what correspondence instruction should be and not what it always is. Fundamentally, the distinguishing

characteristic is the method of study: constant, written efforts by the student and correction by the teacher, and not postal transmission alone.

For purposes of discussion rather than because it is logical, we shall classify the correspondence schools with reference to (1) their ownership and control, and (2) the nature and number of courses offered.

I. *Their ownership and control.* All correspondence schools from the point of view of ownership and control may be divided into three large groups, (1) Public, (2) Quasi-Public, and (3) Private.

(1) *Public.* In the first of these groups are those correspondence schools which are connected with the various state and endowed universities. They are departments of the extension divisions of the institutions; as already said, they are examined in the report in this series on university extension.

(2) *Quasi-Public.* In the schools of this group ownership and control are usually in the hands of a corporation, the latter having been formed for commercial or industrial purposes and conducting educational effort as incidental to its main purpose. Transportation systems, telegraph and telephone systems, insurance societies, public service corporations and the like are all showing tendencies toward standardization of their courses of technical instruction, so that standardization of practice may result, benefiting the whole industry. One of the outstanding examples of this group is the educational department of the National

Commercial Gas Association. Starting with a preliminary course devoted to the fundamentals of mathematics, science and English, particularly as related to the problems inherent in the manufacture and distribution of gas and electricity, the course branches into five divisions corresponding to the chief activities of such companies. These are: (1) industrial power and fuel, (2) illumination, (3) salesmanship, (4) commercial management, (5) accounting and office practice. These courses are given at cost and have a liberal patronage, since they help the employee to advancement.

(3) *Private*. This is the group in which this study is primarily interested. The ownership and control of such schools are of three kinds: (a) Individual or Personal, (b) Partnership, and (c) Stock Company.

(a) *Individual*. At least 80 per cent of all private correspondence schools are owned or controlled by private individuals. These schools may be incorporated or not—most of them are, as a matter of fact, incorporated under the laws of the state from which they operate—but the ownership and management are in the hands of one individual. This is without doubt one of the greatest weaknesses in the private correspondence field. Many of those who start a school do so as a side-line, having other vocations. At the present time the writer knows of men regularly employed in the following vocations who conduct correspondence schools in their odd hours—clergyman,

teacher, artist, clerk, writer, accountant, student, detective, bank examiner, doctor, jeweler, promoter, mail clerk and tinker. Some of the individuals who conduct schools as avocations are capable men, while others have neither the ability, education nor the financial means to conduct a genuine institution of learning. As a result the rate of mortality in the private correspondence field is high, the average length of life being six years. But the new recruits to the field amply make up for the losses and this kind of school is constantly increasing in number.

When the more successful schools of this character acquire a sufficient volume of business, their promoters usually give their full time to them. Some of the owners are professionally engaged in the fields in which they offer their course and may be authorities on the field, but more and more the promoter of correspondence schools tends to be of the type that knows nothing and cares less for educational standards. He sees only the possibility of reaping a rich harvest from dupes through clever advertisements and shrewd campaigns of follow-up letters and "extra-special" offers. Many, many schools are today being conducted by such men. They may secure a course of study, which really is just an ordinary book published in sections of lessons of one chapter, or they may buy a course of study so-called from some defunct school or from an author on a royalty basis. Some schools may offer a number of unrelated courses under the same institutional or

trade name, or they may offer them each under the name of a different school, all of the schools being in the same office. Sometimes six or seven "schools" are found occupying the same desk. Two or three different trade names for the same school may be found frequently. There are also several groups of separate schools, with offices at separate addresses, which are owned by the same individual. The financial returns from these schools in many cases are quite large and a number of such promoters have made fortunes.

(b) *Partnership*. The same conditions and practices found in the preceding group are also to be found in schools owned and controlled by partnerships. There are comparatively few schools of this type. If they are distinguished from the first group at all, it is that they are a little less fly-by-night.

(c) *Stock Company*. The largest and in many respects the best correspondence schools are those owned and controlled by stock companies, with substantial capitalization, adequate staffs and superior courses. The capitalization of some of these schools amounts to as much as \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000; the staff may range from 3,000 to 4,000, including sales force; the number of active students at any one time will range from 100,000 to 225,000. They are not in business temporarily, and in some cases have built up an honorable tradition to which they try to adhere. While they do not forget that they have a body of stockholders demanding dividends, yet they have some sense of

educational values. The usual rate of dividend is from 4% to 10%¹ a year.

In this group of schools there are at least two distinct types of organization. The first is an organization in which instruction by correspondence is the only or the main purpose. The second is an organization formed primarily for other purposes but giving instruction in the field in which the corporation operates. Some examples may be given. First are residence schools of business, auto mechanics, etc., which offer courses in the same field to those whom they have been unsuccessful in securing as resident students. The correspondence work may thus become a kind of glean- ing of what is left after the harvest of the residence field. Second are those which have developed a course of training for their own sales force and later offer the same course to outsiders by correspondence. Third are manufacturing establishments and other concerns which maintain a correspondence study department because of the direct or indirect benefits accruing to their main business. For example, a manufacturer of library supplies maintains a course in librarianship, a publishing firm offers correspondence courses in order that it may increase the sale of books and supplies, or a pattern manufacturer conducts a correspondence course in dressmaking.

II. *The Nature and Number of Courses Offered.* There are two distinct types of correspondence schools classified according to the nature of courses offered.

These two types are again each divided according to the number of courses offered. The two types with respect to the nature of courses are those offering (1) general courses and (2) vocational courses.

(1) *General Courses.* There are approximately sixty private correspondence schools which offer courses of a general nature and enroll about one-fifth of all the correspondence students in the United States. That means, it should be remembered, they enroll two-thirds as many students as do all the resident colleges, universities and professional schools in the country combined. These schools offer various kinds of general courses. The more important are as follows:

(a) *Grade Courses.* There are a few schools offering a variety of courses in elementary school subjects. These are usually intended as a review preparatory to vocational courses or as the equivalent of a regular elementary school training. Other schools like civil service coaching schools offer elementary subjects also but these are classified in the vocational group.

(b) *High School Courses.* A number of private correspondence schools offer the usual high school subjects prerequisite to a high school diploma and credit for college entrance.

(c) *College and Graduate Courses.* There are a dozen or more schools in this class which designate themselves as "colleges" or "universities" and offer various courses in the liberal arts and sciences, both graduate and undergraduate and leading to every

known degree. Some of this work may be commendable, but most of it is devoid of any value, scholastic or otherwise. The catalogues of these schools are rather vague; one institution merely mentions that it will give any "courses which are demanded," while another lists 700 courses and still another 867. The usual "university" of this type is administered and "taught" by one man, perhaps with the assistance of his wife. He does everything. He corrects papers, so far as they are corrected at all; if there are too many papers, he farms out some of them, usually to a former student.

These are the schools that are usually termed diploma mills. The designation may be too harsh for certain of them, but it is much too mild for most. For many of the latter, if not most, "frauds" would be more accurate. At the suggestion of the author, a letter was sent to one of these "universities" saying that the writer had had two years of college work, had taught several years in an ungraded country school and now wanted to secure the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. In a few days a reply was received assuring the writer that his case had been "considered before the entire faculty," which had decided that "in the event the writer had ever written a magazine article" it was very probable that he would be "entitled to receive the Ph.D. degree." If he would send the school the "name" of the article, together with \$8.50, the diploma would probably be sent him. The "student body" of

these "universities" consists for the most part of clergymen and school teachers who find it a vocational asset to have a scholastic degree.

There is another class of schools even worse. These are the schools of chiropractic, naturopathy, electrotherapeutics, masso-therapy and other healing cults, which have in their charters the right to grant degrees and honors not only in their respective professions but "all the degrees in liberal arts and sciences." There are between ten and twenty of such institutions chartered every year in the District of Columbia alone.

(d) *Miscellaneous*. There are in this group a large number of schools offering various courses of every order of merit. These courses are neither cultural nor vocational: Applied Psychology, Personal Efficiency, Memory, Diet, Physical Development, etc. Nearly all of them should be regarded with some skepticism.

(2) *Vocational Courses*. As stated before, approximately 80 per cent of all students by correspondence take vocational courses. It is in this field that the correspondence school has reached its highest stage of development. In most cases special texts have been prepared, with some regard for the educational attainments, or lack thereof, of prospective students. The schools giving such courses vary from conscientious to fraudulent and the work they give from adequate to useless. Two hundred or more courses are offered by schools in this field. The most important are:

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Accountancy | Civil Engineering |
| Advertising | Civil Service |
| Aeronautics | Collections |
| Agriculture | Combustion Engineering |
| Air Brake | Concrete Engineering |
| Architecture | Conductor on Railways |
| Art (commercial) | Contracting |
| Auctioneering | Cooking |
| Auto-body Designing | Costume Designing |
| Auto Mechanics | Credit and Collection |
| Auto Painting | Dairying |
| Banking | Dancing |
| Beauty Culture | Dental Nursing |
| Bee Keeping | Dentistry |
| Blacksmithing | Detective |
| Block Signalling | Diamond Knowledge |
| Blue Print Reading | Domestic Science |
| Boilermaking | Drafting |
| Bookkeeping | Dressmaking |
| Brakeman | Electrical Engineering |
| Bridge Construction | Electrical Meter Engineer- |
| Brokerage | ing |
| Building Construction | Employment Management |
| Business Administration | English (Business) |
| Butter Making | Estimating |
| Candy Making | Factory Management |
| Carpentry | Finger Prints |
| Cartooning | Fire Boss |
| Castings, Ornamental | Fireman |
| Chalk Talks | Foot Culture |
| Cheese Making | Foreign Trade |
| Chemistry | Foremanship |
| Chiropractic | Forestry |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Foundry Work | Lumber Dealing |
| French (Commercial) | Machine Designing |
| Fruit Culture | Machine Shop Practice |
| Gardening | Mail Order |
| Gas Engines | Marine Engineering |
| German (Commercial) | Marketing Farm Products |
| Greenhouses | Mechanical Engineering |
| Heating and Ventilating | Medicine |
| Highway Engineering | Memory Training |
| Home Economics | Metallurgy |
| Horsemanship | Metal Mining |
| Hotel Management | Military Science |
| Hypnotism | Millinery |
| Illustrating | Mining Engineering |
| Interior Decorating | Missions |
| Interior Wiring | Motion Picture Photography |
| Internal Combustion Engi- neering | Motor Designing |
| Inventive Science | Motorman |
| Italian (Commercial) | Moving Picture Acting |
| Journalism | Municipal Engineering |
| Laboratory Technician | Navigation |
| Landscape Gardening | Normal School Training |
| Law (Commercial) | Nursing |
| Law (Real Estate) | Optics |
| Law (General) | Packing House Industries |
| Leather Manufacturing | Penmanship |
| Lettering | Personnel Management |
| Letter Writing | Pharmacy |
| Librarianship | Photograph Retouching |
| Life Planning | Photography |
| Live Stock | Photoplay Writing |
| Locomotive Engineering | Physical Culture |
| | Piano Tuning |

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Plan Reading | Soap Manufacture |
| Playwriting | Spanish (Commercial) |
| Plumbing | Speaking (Effective) |
| Porter (Railway) | Speech Correction |
| Poultry Culture | Stationary Engineering |
| Powerhouse (Electric) | Steam Engineering |
| Production Management | Steam Fitting |
| Proofreading | ✓ Structural Engineering |
| Public Speaking | Sugar Manufacture |
| Radio Engineering | Suggestotherapy |
| Railroad Engineering | Surveying |
| Railway Station Management | Taxidermy |
| Real Estate Business | Tea Room Management |
| Refrigerating | Telegraphy |
| Reinforced Concrete | Telephony |
| Restaurant Management | Textiles |
| Retail Salesmanship | Theatrical Scene Painting |
| Review Courses | Theology |
| Round House | Toolmaking |
| Safety Engineering | Traffic Management |
| Salesmanship | Tree Surgery |
| Sanitary Engineering | Typewriting |
| Sheet Metal Drafting | Vaudeville |
| Shop Practice | Veterinary Medicine |
| Shorthand | Ventriloquism |
| Short Story Writing | Watchmaking |
| Showcard Writing | Window Trimming |
| Sign Painting | Wireless Telegraphy |
| Smelting | Woolen Manufacturing |
| | Wrestling |

This list is instructive. It should be examined closely. For in it is illustrated the whole nature of correspondence education. Consider the courses:

Auctioneering, Brokerage, Butter Making, Cartooning, Chalk Talks, Railway Conductor, Detective, Nursing, Foot Culture, Horsemanship, Hypnotism, Life Planning, Inventive Science, Speech Correction, Playwriting, Ventriloquism, Piano Tuning, Theology, Chemistry and Dancing. There are good schools and bad schools, as we have seen. There are some branches of learning or technical training that can be taught by correspondence provided the school is honestly administered, gives such courses only to those who are prepared to master them and has teachers of the first rank in conscientiousness, pedagogic training and ability. There are other courses that can never be taught by correspondence, no matter what the school or who the teacher. A student who takes some of these courses from a reputable school may be reimbursed for his money and effort; a student who takes any of these courses from a fake "university" is defrauded, no matter what the course; a student who takes certain of these courses from even the most reputable school has wasted his time and money, for they cannot be taken by correspondence. A school must be weighed not only by its permanency and its maintenance of standards but by the nature of its curriculum. If it offers certain courses, it misleads the student, however honest its intentions. The questions involved in consideration of correspondence schools are not only moral. As most correspondence schools go now, moral questions are uppermost, for an appallingly large propor-

tion of the schools are little better than frauds. But pedagogic questions are also involved. And even a school which is moral may be attempting what is, from the point of view of educational science, unjustifiable. And though its motives may be honest, it is earning an illegitimate profit.

CHAPTER IV

METHODS OF ENROLLING STUDENTS

THE field of the correspondence school is almost co-extensive with the population of the country. Great as is our system of education in size, it must not be forgotten that only one of every 116 of the population has finished college. Not one in five finishes high school. Only one in three goes beyond the grade school. If education be considered only as preparation for earning a livelihood the American people as a whole grow to maturity unprepared. The correspondence school, thus, finds almost a whole population needing training for its work while at work. There are, to be sure, night schools, continuation schools and evening trade schools in larger centers. But they are only in urban centers, and even so they are calculated principally to meet the needs of the young.

Large as the number of potential students may be, it is also a fact that from 30 to 80 per cent of the tuition fees paid to correspondence schools are absorbed in getting the enrollment. In other words, the selling cost of correspondence education is high, so high as to require some examination. For the older and more securely established schools the figures just quoted are

too high; their selling cost is nearer the minimum than the maximum. For many if not most of the others the maximum is no overstatement. But even at the minimum the figure is high. Causes are difficult to assign. There may be too much competition. The schools may insist upon quick results and big profits. Correspondence education may be so unfamiliar as to require preliminary efforts of "conversion" that are costly. Or its benefits may be so dubious that few are convinced that it is worth the effort and those who are soon are undeceived and the turnover of students is rapid. New ones must be obtained constantly; and it is an axiom of business that it costs more to get a new customer than to hold one who has been once satisfied. The causes are not so important as the fact, however, for this study. Our purpose in this chapter is to discuss the methods which are employed to secure enrollments. There are three. Some schools employ one, some all; most of them employ all. They are: (1) direct mail, (2) advertising, (3) salesmen.

(1) *Direct Mail*. This method is probably used less than either of the other two, except by those schools which offer highly specialized courses to certain vocational and professional groups, like jewellers, clergymen, teachers, etc. Lists of names are compiled from classified vocational registers or from directories, or they may be purchased from professional listing houses. The names are then circularized. In the first letter a general description of the project is given, with

a stamped envelope or postcard enclosed by which the "prospect" is asked to notify the school whether he is interested. If no reply is received, the name is dropped. If there is a reply, an aggressive follow-up system begins to operate.

(2) *Advertising*. From one-fourth to one-third of all the tuition fees received by the correspondence schools go to pay for advertising in magazines, trade journals and newspapers. Some schools estimate the cost of advertising and letter follow-ups to be from \$10 to \$30 per student, according to the nature of the course sold. The kind of course and the kind of individual to whom it can appeal determine the kind of publication in which the school advertises. A course in accountancy or business administration will not be advertised in the same publication as one in auto mechanics or carpentry. There are some general magazines of national circulation, however, which print the advertisements of all schools for every kind of course.

The school may well be judged by its advertising. One that is honestly administered and has some qualifications to be classed as educational is restrained in its pronouncements or promises. More are not. One need but pick up the ordinary popular magazine. On one page the reader is breathlessly informed that he need only send a post card to a school in Chicago to launch himself on a prosperous and distinguished journalistic career. On the next page it is proved to his satisfaction that only his neglect stands between

him and immortality as an artist; why not, then, send this coupon to this school? On the next a persuasively worded and graphically illustrated announcement shows what wealth lies within the reach of all who will but take the trouble, an insignificant amount of trouble, in fact, to become, say, structural draughtsmen at such-and-such school.

The following captions and excerpts were taken from a few of the correspondence school advertisements appearing in a single issue of a popular magazine:

\$1,800 for a story.

Big Profits in Home Cooking.

Earn \$40 to \$200 weekly.

Make Big Income Raising Poultry.

\$3,500 Hotel Job in Twenty Weeks.

Become a nurse, double your earnings.

\$500 in one month for drawing

Start a money making candy business in your own home.

Learn Photography at home. Earn \$3,000 to \$10,000 a year.

Say good-bye to \$23 a week—earn \$4,500 a year.

\$100 for one commercial drawing—Become an artist this easy way.

Make money at home in your spare time. We teach you how.

It is necessary only to make these citations. The nature of the schools and of their instruction and the result of such appeals on gullible and inexperienced youth can be guessed quickly enough. They are frauds and the result is swindling; and the victims are numerous, appallingly numerous.

(3) *Salesmen*. Most of the older, conservative and substantial correspondence schools use personal salesmen to get new enrollments. They also advertise, though in more sober tones than the advertisements just quoted, but they depend mainly on salesmen. One of the schools which has an organization of 2,000 instructors, administrative officers and clerical workers, has a field sales force of more than 1,000 trained men. This organization, which differs from others only in its being larger, has subordinate Divisions, Districts, Sub-Districts and Routes. A Division comprises one part of the country, a District one or more states or part of a large state, a Sub-District what it implies and a Route one or more towns or a part of a large town. A Division Director is in charge of each Division, with supervising officers for each District and Sub-District.

Such an organization is usually built up on a foundation of a corps of high grade salesmen. Certain schools appoint to their selling force only men who have been school superintendents or principals or who have had some position in their communities, as leading members of the church or chamber of commerce or Kiwanis club and the like. Usually the candidate for salesman is required to complete a course of training by correspondence or even sometimes to take training at the home office. The most intensive work of all the schools, in fact, is devoted to developing the sales force. This is by far the most highly organ-

ized and carefully worked out department of the school.

The following is a list of the major activities or methods of salesmen in attempting to obtain students—it should be understood that not all salesmen, of course, use all these methods.

1. Get an industrial agreement. This consists of selling the correspondence study idea to the responsible head of a firm, who posts announcements in the office and plant of the opportunity to employees to take work which will train them for better positions. Opportunities are also given to salesmen to meet employees. Some firms even refund part of the tuition fee to employees who have successfully completed such a course. One correspondence school makes the claim to having concluded agreements for courses with 2,400 firms.

2. Arrange window displays. An attractive window is rented on a busy street, with displays of cards, lesson papers, reference books, samples of local students' work, duplicate diplomas of well known local students, etc. The rental of these windows is usually paid for in scholarships to some one connected with the business whose space is used. The window displays are the first step in aggressive sales campaigns which are generally repeated every six months.

3. Secure newspaper publicity in the form of news items and paid advertisements. Field salesmen make a practice of cultivating the good will of the local

editors by gathering news items on their routes. They are repaid by publicity.

4. Canvass the names sent from central office. As a result of steady advertising there is a constant flow of inquiries from prospects. Literature and follow-up letters are sent from the central office and their names given local field men for direct solicitation.

5. Make straight "cold canvasses." This consists of meeting new prospects and applying the arts of persuasion without previous preparation.

6. Start new students. When a new student is enrolled his first set of lesson papers arrives within a few days. It is customary for the field man to call on him and help him to start. This call may be a real service or it may be only a means of cultivating good will.

7. Assist backward students. Frequently students lose interest after the first few lessons. The field agent calls on them to offer assistance or encouragement.

8. Collect monthly payments. Many schools do not require this of their salesmen.

9. Keep in touch with former students. Many contacts are made through old students. Many schools pay a commission to former students who are instrumental in getting new ones.

Salesmen are usually paid commissions on the number of enrollments they obtain. This, too, is a dangerous practice. It leads to the enrollment of many students in no way qualified to take a course by their

previous preparation or experience. The whole emphasis on salesmanship is the most serious criticism to be made against the system of correspondence education as it now exists. Perhaps it cannot be avoided when schools are organized for profit. They cannot continue unless they can make a profit. The fact may be unavoidable; but it is a fact. Beyond doubt the sales force and the highly cultivated art of salesmanship result in the satisfaction of existing needs, but they also create a demand which is often artificial. The correspondence school is of indubitable service where it satisfies a demand or creates a demand which can be satisfied in the nature of the school and the capacities of the student. But it is not always possible to draw the line between the satisfaction of demand and the artificial creating of a demand which has a net result in more fees to the school and no possible benefit to the student. And this arises inevitably out of the methods of operation of all correspondence schools. This method may be inevitable for lack of any other which can make possible the continued existence of the schools; but its results are in a measure regrettable none the less.

Sales Literature. Sales literature is needed and used, no matter what method of salesmanship be employed. Nor can any picture of methods used in enrolling students be adequate without examining this literature. Less than half the correspondence schools have what might be called a catalogue. This is prob-

ably due to the fact that most of them offer one course only; of those that offer more than one many do so under a different school name for each course. Some of the schools with a diversified curriculum have excellent catalogues setting forth the courses, with explanations of their content and some information as to method, etc. These are dignified statements by any educational test. But again these are the exceptional schools.

The formal literature of the one-course schools consists of a gaudy booklet in two or three colors, containing pictures of what purports to be faculty, students and school building, with glowing testimonials, florid descriptions of courses and statements of reasons for enrolling which are phrased in the style of the advertisements already quoted. Some of the "universities" already referred to content themselves with mimeographed lists of their hundreds of courses or "what do you want." They literally assure the prospective scholar that they will give him a course in any subject he desires to master.

(2) *Follow-up Letters.* Different schools have different policies governing the kind and number of follow-up letters sent to prospects. The number of letters ranges from one to fourteen. The kind of letter most commonly used is the multigraphed one with a printed rubber stamp signature. Few use a printed, mimeographed or individually typed letter. Approximately half type the name of the individual addressed

at the head of the form letter, while some try to achieve an effect of intimacy by filling in certain words in the body of the letter to indicate direct address—"Now, *Mr. Brown*, we have a number of students in *Blankville*, your home town, etc." These form letters are sent every second, seventh or tenth day until the series has been exhausted.

The appeal the letters aim to make is simple and direct. It is best illustrated by excerpts, which have been taken at random from a few typical follow-up letters. The appeal is not always so naked, but in general this is the tone:

"Are you earning enough money now?"

"Our graduates earn from \$800 to \$1,000 a month."

"My training will quickly put you on Easy Street in a position paying from \$75 to \$200 per week."

"You can earn from \$2,500 to \$5,000 more a year with my training than you can without it . . . and nothing on earth is more fascinating than the work of an auto expert."

"Every day you continue to work for your present salary you are losing money. Enroll now and get the salary-raising benefit of the course for which you are already paying."

Another school concludes a six-page letter with the following peroration:

"If you want to be independent; if you want to make good in the world; if you want to get off somebody's pay roll and head one of your own; if you want the many

pleasures and luxuries that are in the world for you and your family; if you want to banish forever the fear of losing your job—then—*Sign the pay-raising enrollment blank! Get it to me! Right now!*”

A school of chiropractic paints the following glowing picture:

“A single adjustment can often be made in less than one minute and a full adjustment in from three to five minutes. From 50 to 75 patients a day can be treated, and since the usual charge is from \$1.00 to \$2.00 each, you can figure out for yourself the earning possibilities which this profession affords.”

A school which has borne an excellent reputation in the past tells its prospective students that it will “not only guarantee to find positions but we guarantee that students can earn 50% more than they earned when they enrolled, so you can be sure that the training you receive will enable you to better your condition.” Enclosed in the same letter is a certificate of “Job and 50% Raise Guaranteed.” This promises to get the student a job within sixty days of finishing his course at 50% more salary (if he is not now earning more than \$40 weekly) or to refund the payment of the course, provided the prospect enroll within a few days of date. There is one other provision: the course must be finished. Which is fair enough, except that the courses are so difficult that only between 3% and 5% of those who have enrolled over a period of years have finished them.

The correspondence schools, almost without exception, make appeals for prompt enrollment through offers of "special bargain" prices, etc. For example:

"The directors have asked me to write and tell you about the special plan which has just been arranged to help you enroll."

"Some time ago our board of directors gave me the authority to enroll a limited number of students for our complete course in.....upon the payment of only \$1.00 down. But the rush of enrollments was so great that we were soon forced to discontinue this unusual offer. However, so many requests for another opportunity to take advantage of this liberal offer have been received lately, that our directors, in a spirit of fairness to all, have authorized me to renew this Special Offer for Fifteen Days."

"The Board of Directors have finally decided to positively withdraw the big offer of \$62.50 on the 30th of the month, and the original price of \$125.00 will again go into effect." (It is not pointed out which month the 30th applies to, and as a matter of fact the same letter has been in continuous use for five years.)

The concessions offered prospective students consist of smaller initial and monthly payments rather than a reduction of the total fee. Some schools, however, as a last resort always have on hand some convenient "shelf-worn courses which are perfectly good" that can be had at half the regular price. Premiums are freely given by most schools to those who enroll within a specified time. The premium may be a subscription to some paper, a life insurance policy paid up for a

year, "camera worth \$75" given "absolutely free" with a course costing \$79.50.

One school teaching mechanical engineering affirmed that "as long as you can read and write plain English and are willing to study, we will guarantee to do the rest." Another assured its prospects that an equally technical vocation could be mastered in a few "pleasant lessons" that "would in no way detract from your present mode of life." Illustrations can be added without limit.

One last inducement may be described. A School of Music—by correspondence!—limns the glories of the diploma which crowns success in its incomparable course:

"Our diploma is of exceedingly handsome design and is printed in three colors, on extra heavy bond paper from specially engraved plates made for that purpose. The workmanship cannot be surpassed. The border is printed in a striking shade of brown, inside the border is a fine scroll, terminating in the center with an American flag artistically draped, printed in a green tint; the balance of wording is printed in a rich blue, forming a beautiful contrast. . . . You should earnestly strive to become the proud possessor of one, so that you may adorn your wall with as handsome an ornament as ever was printed."

While the quotations just given are characteristic of the literature of the average correspondence school, it is only fair to add that there are those which adopt some standards of decency and truth in representing

themselves. They do not, in fact, misrepresent at all. All of them undoubtedly sound too insistently and shrewdly the note of quick and easy success, the appeal of material betterment is too unremitting. The schools of the highest type, those in every sense legitimate, too often resort to the appeal of the adjoining pictures—a broken, prematurely old man in a slovenly tenement confessing to his wife he has lost his job, and a pink, plump gentleman seated opposite a creamy, lacy wife eating a too sumptuous dinner off plate modeled on the moving picture dining service, the deep-cushioned limousine purring without. What is the difference? One studied at home (the course and school given below) and the other did not. Which, of course, leads those who do not know the pitfalls and the rough stretches in the road to education—even technical education—to believe that all they have to do to be learned and successful is to study by correspondence. They may be endowed with the native capacity and they may have the necessary preparation and they may not. By the time they have found out, their money has been paid. The school may not have misrepresented, but also it has been on the safe side. It cannot lose. The number of applicants rejected by correspondence schools, as long as they are literate, for not being able to master a course is so small as to be negligible. The appeal to men to raise themselves materially is legitimate enough, provided they are given a fair test in advance to determine whether

they can do so in this way. Of course, correspondence education is not the only sphere of modern life in which sales technique has developed far beyond the resistance power or the discriminating faculties of the consumer; but it is one of the more conspicuous and perhaps one of the more dangerous. For it is dangerous to kill a man's enthusiasm for improving himself through education by compelling him to start up a blind alley and thus discourage him from ever venturing forth again.

CHAPTER V

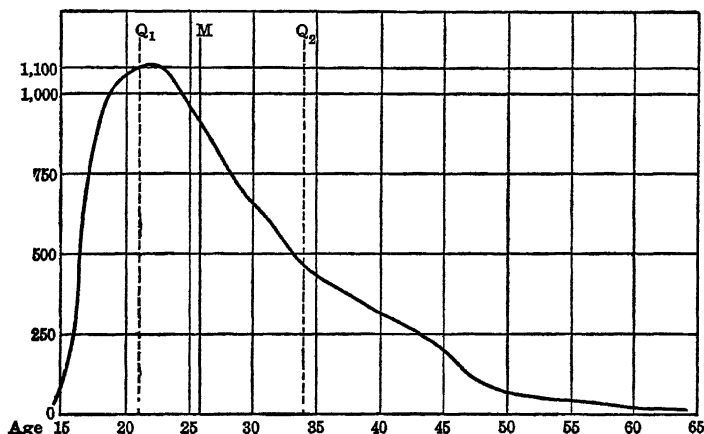
AN ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENT BODY

WE have examined the correspondence schools' form of organization and their methods of attracting students. It is at least as important who these students are and from what strata, socially and educationally, they come. In this chapter, therefore, we shall make an analysis of the correspondence student body with reference to age, previous education, vocation at time of enrollment and the character of the communities from which they come. Since most of the courses are vocational, classification according to sex will reveal little; in some courses the students are exclusively male and in others female, depending on the vocations they train for.

(1) *Age of the Student Body.* The age spread of the correspondence school student is large. In the age curve of 168,871 students enrolled in 25 representative private correspondence schools (Graph I) it will be seen that the span is from 14 to 65. The median age is 26, the middle half is from 21 to 34. In other words approximately three-quarters of the correspondence school students, if this number may be considered

representative, as it doubtless is, are above the usual age of the college senior, 22 years.

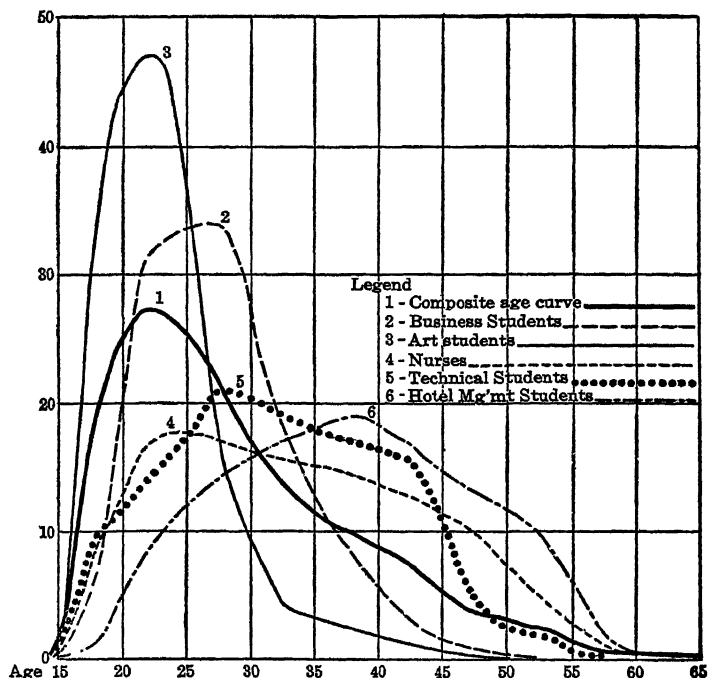
If we assume that 25 years is the median age at time of marriage in this country (the exact median



GRAPH No. I. An age curve of 168,871 students enrolled in twenty-five representative private correspondence schools (showing median and quartiles).

age is slightly lower) it becomes evident that the majority of correspondence students have probably already assumed family responsibilities at the time of their enrollment. This fact alone would make it practically impossible for them to attend residence institutions. They could pursue studies only in evening schools or by correspondence. It is also interesting to note that the age curve does not show a normal distribution but is very definitely skewed toward the lower

end of the age axis, more than three-fourths falling within two-fifths of the entire spread.



GRAPH No. II. Showing the age distribution curves in percentage for periods of five years among correspondence students in five different vocational subjects.

The age distribution varies, however, in the different courses. This variation from the composite age curve is shown for five typical courses in Graph II.

In some courses, such as radio, wireless telegraphy and music, the age distribution is skewed toward the

lower end of the age axis even more than in arts courses, as shown in Graph II.

We have seen that only 23 of every 1,000 children entering the grade schools go as far as the end of college. We have seen also that three-fourths of all correspondence students are above college age. We can conclude, then, that there is no overlapping between correspondence schools and the public educational system. Each occupies its own field.

(2) *Previous Education of Correspondence Students.* The previous education which correspondence students have had varies, according to the courses for which they enroll. Courses like higher accountancy, law and business administration presuppose greater preparation than auto mechanics, painting or steam-fitting. But taking them in mass, a study of 107,346 students enrolled in 19 representative schools shows the following distribution in school years:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| Grade School—total | 34% |
| Fourth Grade and below..... | 2.10% |
| Fifth Grade | 2.70% |
| Sixth Grade | 2.15% |
| Seventh Grade | 4.55% |
| Eighth Grade | 22.50% |
| High School—total | 46% |
| First year | 10.45% |
| Second year | 9.75% |
| Third year | 8.00% |
| Fourth year | 17.80% |

| | |
|----------------------|-------|
| College—total | 14% |
| First year | 6.95% |
| Second year | 3.65% |
| Third year | 1.45% |
| Fourth year | 1.95% |
| Graduate—total | 1% |
| Unknown | 5% |

More than half have had some high school education and 83.5% have gone at least as far as the eighth grade. With so much educational preparation and the knowledge that at least ten years of experience gives—the median age, it should be remembered, is 26—a correspondence student may be expected to do a fairly satisfactory grade of work, provided the instruction is properly given.

(3) *Vocation of Correspondence Students.* Data on this subject were obtained from 24 representative correspondence schools having a total enrollment of 147,548. Two hundred different vocations were represented, which may be classified in five groups, as follows:

(1) *Agriculture.* This group contained such occupations as farmer, farmhand, forest ranger, orange grower, gardener, landscape artist, rancher.

(2) *Business.* This group contained such occupations as accountant, agent, auditor, banker, broker, cafe manager, cashier, clerk, credit manager, executive, insurance agent, merchant, newsboy, salesman, sales

manager, secretary, shipper, stenographer, traffic manager, treasurer, window trimmer.

(3) *Professions*. This group contained such occupations as attorney, chemist, chiropodist, chiropractor, clergyman, dentist, dietician, editor, engineer, judge, musician, nurse, pharmacist, physician, professor, religious worker, teacher.

(4) *Industry*. This group contained such occupations as apprentice, assembler, auto mechanic, bakery, battery repairman, basketmaker, blacksmith, boiler-maker, bricklayer, bridge builder, carpenter, checker, cigarmaker, contractor, cutter, decorator, draftsman, dressmaker, driver, drop forger, fireman, foreman, furniture worker, gear cutter, glazier, grinder, inspector, lathe worker, letter carrier, linotype operator, loader, logger, machinist, manufacturer, mason, mechanic, miller, milliner, mill worker, miner, molder, oiler, painter, paper worker, pattern maker, plumber, polisher, postmaster, pressman, printer, retoucher, sander, seamstress, scaler, screw operator, sheet metal worker, shoemaker, shipwright, steamfitter, stockkeeper, superintendent, timekeeper, toolmaker, warper, watchmaker, weaver, welder, woodsman.

(5) *Unclassified*. This group contained such occupations as army officer, artist, assessor, barber, baseball player, boarding house manager, butcher, chauffeur, cook, detective, dishwasher, dispatcher, flagman, governess, guard, hostess, housekeeper, iceman, janitor, laborer, laundress, lineman, maid, mariner, matron,

motorman, notary, policeman, reporter, riverman, roddman, sailor, sexton, sign writer, soldier, student, teamster, towerman, usher, waitress, watchman, welfare worker, writer.

In each of the 24 schools represented there were students enrolled from all of these groups. There was a definite relation between occupation and course taken. For example, real estate courses drew at least 90% of their students from the business group, business administration and accountancy between 60% and 80% from the same group, and technical, drafting and foremanship courses between 60% and 95% from the industry group. It would appear clear therefore that correspondence courses are generally taken to qualify for better positions in the same occupation.

The percentage of enrollments according to the five major groups is as follows:

| | |
|--------------------|--------|
| Agriculture | 5.0% |
| Business | 34.4% |
| Professions | 9.3% |
| Industry | 22.9% |
| Unclassified | 28.4% |
| | <hr/> |
| | 100.0% |

It will be noted that the majority of students come from the fields of business and industry. It will be noted also that in the unclassified group the majority of vocations are semi-skilled and in this respect similar to the business and industrial groups. If we unite these groups, we have over 85% of correspondence stu-

dents from semi-skilled and distinctly competitive occupations.

(4) *Size of Communities from Which Students Come.* In how large a community does the correspondence student dwell, on the farm or in the village, in small or medium-size towns or metropolitan cities? To answer this rather important question a study was made of the post office addresses of students on the books of 21 schools with a total student body of 124,634. These towns were then classified as to size, as follows:

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Group I..... | Towns of 2,500 or under |
| Group II..... | Towns of 2,500 to 25,000 |
| Group III..... | Cities of 25,000 to 100,000 |
| Group IV..... | Cities of more than 100,000 |

It was then found that 34% of all correspondence students live in Group I, 23.2% in Group II, 16.2% in Group III, and 26.6% in Group IV. A comparative study of the total population of the country, according to the 1920 census, shows that in the same groups there reside 48.6%, 15.6%, 9.8% and 26.0% of the population, respectively. Putting these figures into tabular form for comparison, we have:

| | Per cent of total population in U. S. | Per cent of total enrollment in corr. schools |
|--|--|---|
| Population in towns of 2,500 or less..... | 48.6% | 34.0% |
| Population in towns of 2,500 to 25,000..... | 15.6% | 23.2% |
| Population in cities of 25,000 to 100,000..... | 9.8% | 16.2% |
| Population in cities of more than 100,000.... | 26.0% | 26.6% |

The productivity of correspondence school students in each of these groups would therefore be in the proportion of the following numbers: 7, 15, 17, 10. It will thus be seen that the most fertile soil for correspondence schools is not in rural regions where there is little competition and educational facilities are deficient or in the larger cities where competition is keen and the public school system offers opportunities in its evening and trade schools, but in communities of medium size—from 2,500 to 100,000, where there is a certain degree of competition in semi-skilled vocations but where the community is not large enough to be able economically to provide agencies for this kind of training.

It may also be interesting to look at distribution as to geographical divisions. Taking the divisions of the country as used by the United States Census, we have:

| | Per cent of population enrolled in correspondence schools. |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Pacific Division..... | 2.48 |
| 2. Mountain Division..... | 1.62 |
| 3. East North-Central Division..... | 1.52 |
| 4. New England Division..... | 1.33 |
| 5. West North-Central Division..... | 1.31 |
| 6. Middle Atlantic Division..... | 1.17 |
| 7. South Atlantic Division..... | 1.06 |
| 8. West South-Central Division..... | .93 |
| 9. East South-Central Division..... | .75 |

An examination of figures for each state showing percentage of population engaged in study by correspondence, with states arranged in order of numerical

importance and compared with states arranged in the order of their educational index, would reveal a high degree of correlation. While in the local community the lack of educational facilities may result in more correspondence studying, poor educational facilities also result in less educational interest, even education by correspondence. The appetite for education also comes while eating.

In conclusion it may be well to give a rough picture of the typical student as we have thus far seen him blocked out. He is a young man 26 years old, away from formal schooling for ten years, probably married and living in a town of less than 100,000 population in a state with superior educational facilities. He is engaged in business or industry or in some semi-skilled occupation and has gone far enough to appreciate the fact that the unskilled worker in every line is handicapped. In casting about for guidance in his field of major interest he sees an advertisement of a correspondence course in a popular magazine, assuring him that that way lies success, if it does not promise him fabulous fortune. In response to his letter of inquiry he is bombarded with high-powered sales letters and literature sent by special delivery and timed to arrive at his home on Sunday morning when his wife will see it and they can discuss his future. If he is able to withstand the special inducements thus offered provided he enrolls within a few days, he decides to forego

the golden opportunity just in time to meet a personal representative of some other school who is skilled in handling such cases and forthwith has his name signed on the dotted line.

CHAPTER VI

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND CONTENT

WE have now examined the nature and organization of correspondence schools and analyzed their student body. It remains to examine what and how these schools teach their students. This chapter will be therefore a discussion of methods of instruction and the content of courses. While the discussion will have to be in general terms it will be borne in mind again that there is a wide variation between schools, the good ones making an effort to give genuine substance, the others being contented with receipt of payments.

In certain courses, especially those of high school and college grade, it is customary to use the regular approved text books used in residence schools. These are generally supplemented by a few pages of mimeographed instructions, with lesson assignments, etc. This supplementary material is ordinarily rather meager in quantity, but several of the schools offering high school work have separate pamphlets accompanying and interpreting the text. Assignments are usually made in some detail. Some schools use standard texts but have special editions prepared, printed in pamphlet form, with one chapter to a pamphlet, supplemented by a review quiz section.

The majority of correspondence schools, however, have courses of study especially prepared for their use, copyrighted and used by them exclusively. These may be prepared by a group of experts on the staff or by some one not on the staff who is supposed to be an authority and who frequently copyrights the course himself, prepares it for use by correspondence and is paid on a royalty basis. Where the school is large enough to have its own experts, it employs them in preparing various courses, rewriting them, bringing them up to date and revising and clarifying different sections. Sometimes authorities not on the staff are engaged to write a book, the manuscript of which is then gone over by the school's staff and "written down" to the level of the students the school hopes to attract. The best schools also provide reading and study outlines to accompany text material, but these are distinctly exceptions.

Where special courses are written for correspondence study, they are issued to the students in units of one lesson, in loose leaf or pamphlet form and punched so as to fit in an ordinary binder and be kept together as the courses progress. Lesson assignments in text books usually cover from one to four chapters each, while those in especially prepared courses range from two to forty typewritten pages each, averaging from sixteen to eighteen pages. An examination of 180 different courses showed range in total number of lesson assignments of from 6 to 190 per course, with a median

of 24. Two-thirds of all the courses examined had less than 35 lesson assignments each. It may thus be computed that the most frequent number of lesson assignments is 24 and the average length of an assignment 16 typewritten pages and the length of the ordinary correspondence course is 400 typewritten pages approximately or about 200 pages of printed matter, about half an ordinary college text.

As noted above, at the end of each lesson assignment is a written review, which may be a series of from ten to fifteen questions, a number of true and false statements to check, a completion test, a matching test, an essay or a combination of all of these. Some schools, again the exceptions, also make provision for a personal inquiry service, either by mail or personal visit. The final examination at the end of the course is little more than an extended lesson test and frequently is a formal procedure, but it is almost always required when a diploma or certificate is issued. Few schools require the formality of an examination before some responsible proctor. Where the diploma issued is in the form of a standard degree, the examination is taken under the honor system.

Except for those few schools which provide personal service, there is only one point at which the personal element can be introduced in correspondence instruction. That is in the correction of lesson papers. It is important to ask how this is carried out. The lack of personal contact is admittedly the weakness of in-

struction by correspondence and much thought is given to the problem by those more seriously engaged in the field. The practice of schools in correcting lessons varies widely. They may be divided into four classifications.

(a) Correct no papers sent in by the student. Such a course is in reality nothing but a reading course, with regular instalments coming every week or ten days.

(b) Correct no papers but encourage the student to write in for help over difficult places, general guidance, etc.

(c) Have a model solution printed for each set of review problems of test questions, which may be enclosed in a separate envelope with the suggestion that they be not referred to until the assignment shall have been completed. Some schools also send the answers with the following lesson or require the written report to be sent to the school, which returns it with the correct answers. This method is very common.

(d) Have each lesson paper carefully corrected in red ink and returned to the students with such suggestions and comment as may be appropriate. Most of the better grade schools—which are, however, in a small minority—maintain a staff for this service exclusively. Some also have the part-time service of readers who handle papers at a specified rate per lesson or by the hour.

The usual equipment for a course consists of lesson texts only, and, as we have seen, these are often very

brief. Much effort has been expended in simplifying certain technical courses to make them easy for the average student to grasp. Some of the texts of this character have a high degree of merit. In some courses references for collateral reading also are suggested. In courses like drafting, electricity, etc., in which instruments and other equipment are indispensable, the school usually supplies some, adding the charge to the tuition fee. At least one school in auto mechanics offers in its advertisements to supply its students with a second-hand automobile engine for experiments while taking the course on deposit of \$25, returnable after the engine is sent back. Some of the schools feature in their advertisements the free equipment which is given, but an examination of such materials shows them to be mediocre both in quantity and quality. Other schools promise in their advertisements to provide certain materials but do not specify when. After the student has made his first payment he learns that he will get the necessary equipment only when the whole tuition fee is paid. As this is paid on the instalment plan it may be months before he sees what he has paid for; and then it is often not much better than useless. A clerk in one of the larger schools carrying on a national advertising campaign informed the author that it was the practice of the school not to send the promised equipment until it was demanded by the student and then answer that it had already been shipped and was lost in transit, the student thus

being cheated. Appropriate action has recently been taken by the post office authorities and the Vigilance Committee of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World to stop this practice.

Lack of personal contact between teacher and student is not the only weakness in the idea of education by correspondence. There are other disadvantages latent in its very nature. Under the most favorable conditions home study demands a high degree of will power and persistence. Distracting influences of every kind, sometimes even unfavorable home conditions, combine with the difficulties inhering in the mastery of any subject to make the student who begins with enthusiasm and ambition drop out long before completion. The student mortality, high in all forms of education, is inordinately high in education by correspondence. Data obtained from 75 schools show that the proportion of students completing courses normally running a year was just 6%. Shorter courses have a higher percentage of completions. A few years ago one of the largest schools gave out the information that 40% of the students enrolled never sent in any lessons for correction, only 66% paid for the courses in full and only 2.6% completed courses they had begun. Aside from other considerations, this has a very practical implication for the schools. Nearly all correspondence students pay their tuition fee on the installment plan and when they cease studying they also cease paying. There is a very practical reason then

why schools should strive to keep a student's interest from flagging. Various devices are employed to this end.

Schools maintaining a field organization instruct their representatives to make personal calls when a student has failed to send in lesson papers for some weeks. If he finds difficulties in the lessons the representative tries to help him over them. Personal letters are sent students at intervals to indicate the school's interest in their progress and to stimulate them to continue studying. In addition to personal letters there is an intermittent stream of "inspirational" literature along the lines of "personal efficiency" as drawn from "applied psychology" or inspirational lectures of the "Acres of Diamonds" type. Some schools conduct house organs which are sent out regularly, containing articles on success, testimonials from students who have taken courses and used them to advantage, etc. Sometimes progress reports are sent to the students' employers, especially where the employer has been instrumental in having the student enroll or is paying part of the tuition. These methods are all legitimate; another is somewhat questionable. Practically all schools make it a rule to be over-generous in their grading. Unfavorable marks are seldom given. However poor the lesson paper may be, the student is never told so, lest he be discouraged. At the most he is told that he has done well, but that future lessons "will undoubtedly come nearer to per-

fection." Up to a point this is good pedagogy, especially if some constructive criticism be made; but it is equally likely to deceive the student and to induce him to carry on when the benefit he obtains is nil. This is a good policy if pursued by the most disinterested teaching staff and only then.

In summary, there is no uniformity of instructional method among correspondence schools and the instructional content varies from admirable to worthless. The course is usually short, as measured by the amount of study material to be mastered, and the correction of lesson papers is little more than perfunctory with the great majority of schools. And the mortality rate among students is appalling, though all schools, some from partly disinterested motives and some from purely selfish motives, try to lower it.

CHAPTER VII

COSTS

THE magnitude of the operations of the correspondence schools and their importance in American society measured quantitatively have already been suggested. There is not a sufficient amount of information available for more than tentative statements with regard to correspondence school finances, but we have already seen that we have here a major industry. The total receipts of the private correspondence schools of the country in the form of tuition fees come to \$70,000,000 a year, one and a half times as much as the combined tuition fees received by all the colleges and universities in the country.

It is necessary to make some inquiry into the disposition of this sum, to ask what this \$70,000,000 pays for. Budgetary data are lacking, unfortunately; no definitive analysis can be made. But some general statements can be ventured as to the distribution of the tuition dollar: how much is spent for advertising, salesmen's commissions, promotion staff and administration and how much for instruction? What, specifically, does the individual student pay for his instruction? An examination of a large number of

courses shows the fee per course to range from \$10 to \$280; for the greater number it is around \$40. The fee per lesson ranges from a few cents to \$11.25, with \$1.66 as the median—assuming that the course is completed.

What does he pay this for? We know that the cost of advertising runs from \$2 to \$30 per student. The selling budget of a single institution may be over \$2,000,000. We know that the salesman's commission amounts in some cases to one-third of the tuition fee. Further, an investigation of 100 schools showed that the promotional staff is usually from four to six times as large as the instructional staff, in a few cases from twenty to thirty times as large. It need not be added that the salaries paid promotion men are far, far higher than those paid instructors. And, correspondence schools being privately owned and conducted primarily as investments, profits must be paid. The most superficial survey shows that a number of individuals have made enormous profits out of the correspondence field, while a number of schools owned by stock companies have consistently paid dividends as high as 10% a year over a long period. Not much, then, of each dollar paid by the student for tuition buys instruction; very little, in fact, though no exact apportionment can be made. An old and well-established school with a large clientele built up on some prestige can cut its overhead and promotional expense and return more to the student; but of the other

schools it is not unfair to cite the case of one whose financial statement shows that out of every dollar spent from receipts just three-quarters of one cent goes to pay for instruction, including the correction of papers. It should be pointed out that overhead is high in every venture in the United States, even in educational ventures. But the conclusion cannot be escaped that when an educational system in its very nature requires so large an expenditure just to perpetuate itself, the burden of proof rests on it to justify its maintenance. It must be able to show educational results more clearly even than other systems. The correspondence school no doubt must pay more to get students than, for instance, a college; it should therefore be a school of unexceptionable standards.

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CHAPTER VIII

LEGAL STATUS OF CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

WHEN it is considered that the correspondence schools have more students than all the colleges, universities and professional schools in the United States combined, there is something startling in the fact that they are almost without any governmental supervision of any kind, either national or state. In a few states some effort at regulation has been attempted and this not very thorough; but in most the correspondence school has the same status as any other business corporation. Indeed, if it is not incorporated at all, it is subject to no other restrictions than those imposed on all individuals by the criminal laws.

It is necessary to look into the question of legal status, and for this purpose we shall divide the schools into two groups, those which grant degrees and those which do not.

(1) *Non-degree Conferring Schools.* These should be taken up first, since they comprise roughly nine-tenths of the private correspondence schools in the country. At present not more than 40 of the 300 or more schools of this character are under the supervi-

sion of any recognized authority. These 40 are those which are situated in New York and Massachusetts. In New York the supervision of correspondence schools is implied rather than specifically provided in the law. The paragraph in the law which applies to the correspondence schools states:

"No diploma or degree shall be conferred in this State except by a regularly organized institution of learning meeting all requirements of law and the University. . . ."

The Board of Regents is charged with administering the law but to date it has been able to give this phase of it little attention because of an inadequate staff. The following excerpt from the Board's report for 1924 will show the Board's endeavors:

"In the past it has been found that the two chief faults of correspondence schools have been

"(1) Promises to provide instruction for admission to certain professions, admission to which can be gained only through the completion of an actual residence course of study in an approved professional school.

"(2) The insistence even to the extent of bringing a subscriber into a court of law that such subscriber shall pay the entire fee for the course of study, whether he completes all or any part of it or not.

"Keeping these two abuses in mind the Department has refused to approve correspondence courses in professions in which the law requires actual resident school study. But this has not reached the root of the matter since popular magazines contain many advertisements of correspondence

schools which cannot be reached because they are located outside of the State but which nevertheless hold out promises to individuals within the State that the completion of such correspondence course of study will prepare them for admission to the professional licensing examination.

"To make certain that the second fault, above referred to, should not be found in correspondence schools in this State, the Department has insisted that every correspondence school applying for approval must insert in its proposed contract with the subscriber a guarantee to the effect that should the subscriber, by reason of sickness or physical inability, straitened financial circumstances or inaptitude, be unable to complete the course of study a proportionate part of the fee would be returned to him if he had paid the full amount of the fee and that if he made his payments on the instalment plan, he would not be obliged to pay any further instalments. In every case we have required that the guarantee should be so worded that it properly protects not only the subscriber but the school as well."

When the schools have passed the above review they are permitted to place on their letterheads and literature, "Approved as a correspondence school under the laws of the State of New York." This law has been operative for three years, but not more than half the schools in the state have as yet obtained even this nominal approval.

In the General Laws of Massachusetts, Chapter 93, Section 22, the heart of the correspondence school law is as follows:

"The department of education may establish rules and regulations governing correspondence schools."

The most apparent activity of the Department of Education in this connection is the collection of statistics annually from correspondence schools doing business within the state. The Department asks schools to furnish information on the following ten points: Name of school, location, kind of organization, names of officers, office located in Massachusetts, address of agent in Massachusetts, list of courses offered, number of persons enrolled in each course in Massachusetts in preceding twelve months, number of students receiving certificates during previous twelve months and samples of advertising literature. It is to be noted that no information which might reveal the quality of work done and relation of performance to promises is exacted. Supervision is perfunctory and limited.

The state of Oregon has a law governing correspondence instruction in high school, college or university subject according to the following provision:

"That any correspondence school or educational institute that gives instruction in the State of Oregon by correspondence in high school subjects or in any other branch of learning commonly taught in a college or university must, from this time on, be known to conduct a resident school of at least the same grade and character of work that it represents itself to do by correspondence." (Oregon Laws, Chapter XXIX, Sec. 5377.)

This, to be sure, effectually limits correspondence schools in the state of Oregon. In effect it outlaws schools which teach by correspondence only.

Kansas and New Mexico each has a law making it "unlawful for any correspondence school, business college or commercial department of any other school, or its agents, to canvass prospective students therein for the purpose of selling to such students or anyone for such students any scholarship or tuition in advance in such school."

With these exceptions there are no limitations by law on correspondence schools which do not confer degrees. After what has been recited in this volume it is superfluous to add that there should be some regulation, particularly in those states where correspondence schools are most numerous—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Missouri and the District of Columbia. In the Appendix is given the draft of a law proposed for the state of Illinois by certain of the larger schools in that state. While susceptible to some improvements it may serve as suggestive of the outlines such a law might take for correction of some of the abuses in the correspondence field.

(2) *The Degree-conferring Schools.* There are probably 50 degree-conferring schools of correspondence in the United States. If we had a full roster of the so-called schools of Chiropractic, Mechano-Therapy, etc., etc., we should quite likely have twice as many. It should be borne in mind also that many

of the latter are chartered with the privilege of granting "any degree whatsoever." It is small wonder then that their tribe increases so prodigally. For the regulation of all such schools there is practically no provision in law. In fact, there is very little provision for the regulation of any kind of degree-conferring institution, resident or correspondence.

An unpublished chart prepared by William R. Hood, of the United States Bureau of Education, use of which has generously been permitted, gives a survey of legislation in various states governing the establishment of educational institutions.

1. *How College Charters Are Issued.* In three states only—Maryland, Massachusetts and Vermont—are colleges required to secure their charters by special act of the legislature. In all other states they are secured under General Law or under the General Business Corporation Laws of the state.

2. *Who Grants the Charter.* In eleven states all that is required is to file the proper application with one of the local county officers like the Recorder of Deeds, County Clerk, Treasurer or Probate Judge. In 37 states the application must be filed with a state official—the Secretary of State, Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Charter Board, Board of Regents, etc. In only seven states in the Union do the officials to whom application is made have any discretionary power with respect to granting charters.

3. *Number and Qualification of Incorporators.* In

nineteen states three or more citizens, regardless of any scholastic attainments, may be given a charter for a college or university empowered to grant all academic degrees in the arts or sciences. They need not even know how to read and write. They must only be three and citizens. In seventeen states there must be five or more incorporators, but in South Carolina and Washington only two are required and in Georgia only one. In most of the states the charters are granted in perpetuity, in a few they run for 100 years or 50 years, and in two states for 20 years only, with the privilege of renewal. Some states require a majority of the incorporators to be residents of the state, others require only one to be a resident.

4. *Property and Endowment Requirements.* Only six states make any provision covering these subjects. They are New York, Pennsylvania, Nebraska, Michigan, Ohio and North Carolina. These require that the institution desiring a charter shall have, respectively, \$500,000, \$500,000, \$100,000, \$100,000, \$25,000 and "sufficient income to maintain an adequate faculty and equipment."

5. *Number of Professors.* One state specifies that there shall be eight full-time professors, two that there shall be six, two others that there must be an "adequate faculty," while 43 states make no provision at all on the subject.

6. *Course of Study.* Four states provide that four years of work be required, two provide that work shall

be of university grade, two that it shall be approved by the state board of education, one that it shall be "adequate," and one other (Arkansas) that degrees shall not be given for correspondence study. The other states are silent on the subject.

7. *Admission Requirements.* Three states provide that a college granting a degree must require four years of high school preparation; the laws of the other 45 states are silent on the subject.

8. *Supervising Authority.* Eight states require their state boards of education to supervise degree-conferring institutions. In three states supervision is left to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, in one to the Governor, in another to the legislature, in another to the state council of education. Thirty-three states make no provision for supervision.

9. *How a Charter Is Revoked.* When a charter has once been granted an institution to confer degrees it can be revoked as follows: in four states by action of the legislature, in three by the state board of education, in two by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in one by the District Court, in another by the board of regents, in another by the state council of education; in thirty-two states no way is provided by law.

It will be seen, then, how easy it is in this country to organize a "college" or "university" and prey on the unsuspecting. What might be expected except that the charlatan and swindler avail himself of the

opportunity to make easy profits? He has. We have already touched on some of his manifestations in the field of the correspondence school. It would be easy to multiply illustrations.

The quack school as a matter of fact does not confine its activities to the United States alone. In fact, some of the type get their charters here in order to operate principally in other countries, where legal supervision is stringent and the word university carries certain connotations. They have agents throughout the world trafficking in what one American consul calls "damnifying degrees." The files of the Department of State contain hundreds of reports from American consuls in Europe, Asia and South America bearing on the activities of the agents of American diploma mills. Quotations from the report of one consul general in Germany may be illustrative:

"A traffic in American academic degrees has been carried on in Europe . . . as a result the American doctor has become a most questionable honor on the European continent . . . in Germany an object of suspicion by public and police. . . . Many German possessors of the American doctor title are illiterate persons that university men from our best institutions would look at askance. . . . To what extent the discreditable business has gone is perhaps best gleaned from the fact that on the 4th of July, last, there greeted us Americans in Germany an illustrated page of the 'Lustige Blaetter,' published in Berlin, with a penny-in-the-slot machine, under which the inscription could be read, 'Put your dollar in the slot and pull out an Ameri-

can doctor diploma!'. . . Has not the time come for an earnest and united effort of the American college, the educational associations, state and national, and all other bodies interested in the good repute of American scholastic and professional institutions to take harmonious action in the states of our Union for legislation that will bring the degree conferring power under strict state supervision, if not with the help of the U. S. Commissioner of Education, under national authority? . . . It is a lamentable fact that in some states any body of men may form educational corporations with power to confer degrees, 'without any guarantee whatever that the privilege will not be abused.' . . . A decision recently rendered by the highest German Court (the Reichsgericht) taboos the professional schools of America as private commercial enterprises. . . . It were high time that something be done to redeem ourselves and our academic standing as a people regardless of individual interests or political differences."

The following is taken from a report of the American Consul in Venice (1924) on the conviction of one of the agents for at least two different American diploma mills:

"American universities in general, in fact, all American institutions came in for their ridicule, as may be expected, so that the prestige of American education has suffered somewhat of a shock in Italy at present. The inability of foreigners to differentiate between such universities as the ——— University of ———, and the ——— University of ——— (which were frequently mentioned in the testimony, owing to Mr. ——— having represented them) made it seem natural that the inferiority of American institutions

of learning should appear generally manifest to all who heard the testimony, or read the press notices.

"As previously pointed out by the Consulate in several of its dispatches of last year, present conditions whereby diploma mills of this sort are permitted to exist for the foreign market in degrees of American origin, militate against the entire educational system of the United States and its prestige abroad.

"There are only too many critics in foreign countries of American culture and learning. There is nothing which serves more to undermine any progress which culture may make in their opinions than the unfavorable impressions caused by such diploma mills as have just had their innings in Venice."

The charters of a few of these diploma mills have come into the hands of unscrupulous foreigners. One such charter, granted by the state of Illinois in 1915, came into the possession of a native of India. In the literature which he circulated throughout that country he gave as one of the "rules" of the "university" that "a maximum grade of 50 is required for passing in any subject. An average grade of 50 is required for promotion to graduation." All literature was signed: "Dr. A.... F...., Ph.D., LL.D., D.C.L., Commissioner for Pennsylvania, Illinois, New York, Arizona, and Ohio, U. S. A., in India. Delegate General." The government of India, being less lenient than our own, issued a fraud order against the many-times doctor and compelled him to surrender his charter to the state of Illinois.

The American Consul at Breslau reported in December, 1924, that an American university chartered in one of our states is being conducted there by two German citizens and that doctor's degrees are being sold for between \$60 and \$100.

The American vice-consul at Calcutta reported in March, 1923, as follows:

"The Government of Bengal is informed that a private medical college styled the ——— is to be established at ——— Street, Calcutta, for the purpose of training students in medicine so that they may obtain M.B. and M.D. degrees which will be formally conferred by the ——— University of Illinois, U. S. A. . . . Examination papers are to be sent from America and the candidates' written answers will be sent to America to the authorities of the ——— University who may then grant degrees."

It is interesting to add that approximately one hundred correspondence schools refused to send the author any information about the degrees they would grant him when he wrote from a New York City address. When he gave an address on a rural free delivery route they began to flood him with radiant literature. The deductions are too obvious to draw.

That this situation cries to be remedied also is obvious. Two steps at least could be taken. The first is for state legislatures to create a supervising board for all the colleges and universities within its borders and give this body power to investigate all institutions desiring to incorporate as colleges or uni-

versities and grant charters only if they conform to certain standards. If not a board, the State Superintendent of Education could be charged with this responsibility. Further, state legislatures could amend their laws requiring persons who desire to incorporate for educational purposes to show certain financial resources—\$50,000 or \$100,000 would be enough to correct many of the present abuses. This would keep out the clerk who sets up a university with himself and his wife as faculty.

Both of these steps have been taken with some success in certain states. In New York and Pennsylvania there is a supervising board for all colleges and universities, and no degree-granting institution can be incorporated unless its educational standards meet the approval of the board and it can show that it has resources of \$500,000. In New Jersey the State Board of Education has recently been made the supervising board for colleges and universities granting degrees. In Nebraska it is required as a condition precedent to the incorporation of a college or university that a showing of property worth \$100,000 be made. In Arkansas a bill was passed in 1911 authorizing the Superintendent of Public Instruction to supervise colleges and universities and requiring persons desiring to incorporate an educational institution to have at least \$100,000 worth of property. In Massachusetts a bill was enacted in 1912 requiring the State Board of Education to report to the legislature on all proposals for in-

corporating new colleges and universities. In Maryland the legislature in 1912 authorized the State Board of Education to make a list of approved colleges and universities. As long ago as 1897 the National Education Association and the American Bar Association unanimously put themselves on record as favoring state supervision of degree-giving institutions.

If this book does nothing else, it will have served its purpose if it establishes a case for the necessity of more stringent supervision of all educational institutions, with some special reference, perhaps, to those which conduct their work by correspondence. Such a result would only be of advantage to every reputable institution in the United States, whether resident or correspondence.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS

ENOUGH has been said about the importance of the correspondence school as an institution. That its importance has been unrecognized by legislators, educators and sociologists is clear. For better or worse the correspondence school is the channel of education followed by more American adults than any other. What education these adults get if any, how much and what kind, depends on how education by correspondence is administered and by whom.

In the first place, it is incontestable that there is a need for such an agency. No matter how alluring the advertising and resourceful the salesmanship, the correspondence school could not get 1,500,000 new students every year unless some demand for such instruction existed. The correspondence school may meet the need badly; but it meets it and no other agency does. The fact is that vast numbers of the American people are unprepared to earn their livelihood. They find themselves with the responsibilities of maturity and at the same time lacking the necessary training to better themselves materially. They cannot go back to school; they must seek training elsewhere.

The public educational system does not provide it except in certain larger centers; they must look elsewhere. The correspondence school goes out to them. If some of the time or most of the time it exploits, it at least is the only opportunity offered them. If the private correspondence school is inadequate, the responsibility devolves on the nation to provide a more adequate agency or to take steps to ensure the improvement of the private correspondence school.

In the second place, there is nothing inherent in correspondence as a method of instruction to disqualify it as a way to education. Certainly, there are some branches of learning and some kinds of training that cannot be given by correspondence, no matter how good the instruction and how high the ideals of the instructor. In any branch of learning or any kind of training there are patent disadvantages in the lack of personal contact between teacher and pupil. The best correspondence instruction can never confer the benefits of free and unbroken association between teacher and pupil which is possible in education in residence. But attendance at school is not practicable for the majority of adults. They have no choice; they must find some other channel. On the other hand, there are some advantages to education by correspondence for adults. Given a well equipped and conscientiously conducted correspondence school, the student has the undivided attention of the teacher while he is reciting, though it be in writing. He must

work out his lesson by himself on his own resources and he must work out the whole lesson by himself. And being compelled to put it into writing he must make at least an effort at organizing all his ideas on the subject before him. Also he works at his own tempo, set by himself and not fixed by the average capacities of a large number of students studying simultaneously. And he can begin when he likes, study at any hours convenient to him and finish as soon as he is able; he need not wait for a semester to begin and remain until it ends, he is not retarded by the slowness of some and artificially speeded up by the quickness of others.

Unfortunately the majority of correspondence schools are not well equipped and still less conscientiously conducted. A large proportion of them are not conducted as schools at all. They are commercial enterprises designed to make quick and easy profits. Many of them are in the shady zone bordering on the criminal. A large proportion of those who enroll in correspondence courses are wasting time, money and energy or even are being swindled. And only the more sophisticated can know in advance whether they are to be swindled or not, only those who can read between the lines in alluring advertisements and measure the character of the go-getting salesman. On the other hand, there is also a small minority of correspondence schools which, although the making of profit is their first consideration, a dangerous situation at best in

education, do none the less give value received and can show a record of concrete benefit to thousands of students.

The conclusion is obvious that the first great need in this field is an almost automatic separator of the sheep from the goats. Such a machine can never work unerringly and to perfection. Evasion is none too difficult in any field. But the most glaring abuses could be remedied. The clear charlatan could be driven out. The faker could be disarmed. Only those whose intentions at least were legitimate would be permitted to operate. The victimizing of hundreds of thousands who now are virtually robbed of savings and whose enthusiasm for education is crushed would cease.

This end is not impossible of accomplishment. There are two means. First, of course, the government, both national and state, must accept responsibility. Adequate legislation and enforcement by strict supervision are indispensable. They are prerequisite and preliminary to every other step, to any possible advancement. They are necessary as the exercise of police power for the protection of the citizenry. Second, the responsibility devolves upon the reputable schools to purge their profession. It is, indeed, to their interest to do so. As the situation is now, the burden of proof rests upon all correspondence schools. It ought to be possible to assume that every school is honorable in its intentions. The reputable schools for their own sake must take the initiative in bringing

the arm of the law and public opinion against the diploma mill.

Theirs is primarily a moral responsibility. They have also a professional obligation. Pedagogically education by correspondence is almost *terra incognita*. That it has its own methods, differing fundamentally from class room teaching methods, its own problems of texts, study material, correction and grading, needs no demonstration. Little research has been made on these problems, even little thought given. The stature of correspondence education will be raised in proportion as those professionally engaged in it will raise it to the level of a science. Joint effort by the reputable and well established schools will not only create public confidence in the correspondence school but lay a foundation for a science of education by correspondence. Out of such effort certain standards of practice will develop, ethically and educationally. Correctives to certain defects in the best schools will be worked out naturally. Proper standards of advertising and salesmanship will be worked out and, if the association is vigilant and sincere, followed. And problems common to all correspondence schools, educational problems, will be solved in time. Not only the school but its public, the American adult who is in need of technical training, will profit. And education by correspondence will be entitled to more serious consideration, to a less dubious right to inclusion within the field of adult education.

APPENDIX

SUGGESTED LAW FOR REGULATION OF CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

A BILL FOR AN ACT providing for the licensing, inspection and control of correspondence schools and providing a penalty.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly:

SECTION 1. That hereafter it shall be unlawful to establish, conduct or maintain a correspondence school or to carry on or conduct correspondence school work, or to continue to conduct, carry on, or maintain such correspondence school or correspondence school work in this state without first obtaining a certificate from the Department of Registration and Education and otherwise complying with the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 2. Any duly incorporated correspondence school desiring to establish, conduct or maintain correspondence school work in this state shall file an application for a certificate with the Department of Registration and Education, which shall be submitted in such form and detail and shall set forth such facts as said Department shall prescribe. Upon such application the Department of Registration and Education shall examine the same to ascertain whether such correspondence school complies in all respects with the provisions of this Act, and for that purpose shall, if deemed necessary, have authority to call for additional information, to examine books, records and papers, to require the attendance and to interrogate any of the officers, agents or other responsible persons connected with such correspondence school and any other person or persons who may possess any information necessary to enable the Department to arrive at a judicious determination. If upon

the examination into the work of such school, the Department of Registration and Education shall be convinced that the school is being or will be properly conducted, and in compliance with the provisions of this Act, they shall thereupon issue a certificate to such school to carry on instruction by correspondence among the citizens of this state, which certificate shall be valid for a period of one year from the date of issue, unless sooner revoked, as hereinafter provided. If such school is not being, or, in the judgment of the Department, will not be properly conducted and in compliance with the provisions of this Act, the Department shall have no authority to issue a certificate, and it shall so inform the applicant in writing, and in such denial for a certificate shall state specifically the reason why such certificate has not been granted. If any duly incorporated correspondence school shall have been refused a certificate as herein provided, and shall subsequent to such refusal, make such changes and improvements in such correspondence school as to comply with the provisions of this Act, and the rules and regulations of the Department of Registration and Education issued thereunder, such correspondence school may, at any time thereafter, make a second or other subsequent application for a certificate, and the Department is hereby authorized to act in such cases as in the case of original applications. All applications shall be acted on by the Department within thirty days of their receipt by the Department.

SECTION 3. Any certificate so issued shall be good for a period of one year from the date of issuance, unless sooner revoked, upon the expiration thereof, and if such school shall have maintained the required standing, the board shall issue subsequent certificates, each good for one year.

SECTION 4. The Department of Registration and Education may, at any time, revoke a certificate issued to a correspondence school for violation of any of the provisions of this Act or any of the rules and regulations of said Department issued in pursuance thereof. Such certificate may be revoked by the Department upon written charges, duly verified, specifying the acts alleged or grounds

for such revocation, a copy of which charges shall be served upon the holder of such certificate. Such charges shall be heard by the Director or other officer of said Department designated by the Director. Notice of time and place of such hearing shall be served upon the holder of such certificate, either personally or by mail, at least ten days prior to such hearing. At the time and place so appointed the holder of such certificate shall be given an opportunity to be heard in defense of the charges preferred against him.

SECTION 5. Any applicant who has been denied a certificate, or any applicant whose certificate has been revoked shall have the right of an appeal from the decision of the Department of Registration and Education to thecourt of the county in which the applicant so appealing resides, if such applicant be a resident of this state, within twenty (20) days from the date of such denial or revocation, by giving a bond, to be approved by the clerk of the court, in the sum of five hundred dollars (\$500), conditioned to pay all costs if the decision of the court shall be determined against the applicant: Provided, That if the applicant be a non-resident, he shall have the right of an appeal to thecourt of Sangamon County and in all other respects such appeal shall be governed by the provisions of this section. In case of revocation of a certificate and appeal, the revocation shall not become effective until the appeal has been decided and no revocation shall interfere with the completion of service on any enrollments secured before such revocation.

SECTION 6. Each application submitted to the Department of Registration and Education shall be accompanied by a fee of one hundred dollars (\$100). If a certificate be granted to such applicant, as provided in this Act, such fee shall be covered into the state treasury and shall be credited to the correspondence school fund; if the application for a certificate be denied, the fee shall be returned to the applicant; provided, that no such fee or any part thereof shall be returned in the event that a certificate shall be revoked. If a certificate shall be denied by the Department and the decision of the Department be after-

wards reversed by any court, the applicant shall, upon being granted a certificate by action of the court, pay the fee of one hundred dollars (\$100) as hereinbefore provided. Each applicant so granted a certificate shall, for each annual renewal certificate, pay the sum of twenty-five dollars (\$25) which shall be credited to the correspondence school fund.

SECTION 7. No certificate shall be granted to any correspondence school making application therefor unless such a correspondence:

(a) Shall be duly incorporated under the laws of the state of Illinois or under the laws of some other state, or territory of the United States, or under the laws of the United States, and shall file with such application a copy of such incorporation papers.

(b) Shall have a paid-up capital stock of not less than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000), and shall satisfy the Department of Registration and Education that it is solvent and able to carry out all financial obligations involved in its contracts.

(c) Shall hold a certificate under the Blue Sky Law of this state, if such certificate be required by said Act or Acts.

(d) Shall offer instruction or training that is adequate, suitable and proper for the announced purpose of each course or courses offered.

(e) Shall possess sufficient and proper facilities for conducting its courses, correcting papers and other materials submitted by students and for furnishing the students competent assistance or any services embodied in the enrollment contract.

(f) Shall have a resident staff of examiners and instructors who are qualified, in the judgment of the Department of Registration and Education to successfully conduct the work entrusted to them, and that at least seventy-five per cent of all such work be handled by the resident staff.

(g) And shall possess such other essential qualifications as the Department of Registration and Education may prescribe.

SECTION 8. The Department of Registration and Education shall have authority to authorize the inspection of any correspondence school which has been granted a certificate under the provisions of this Act to determine whether such school is being properly conducted and in compliance with the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 9. Each and every correspondence school licensed by the terms of this Act shall make such reports, annually, as may be required by the Department of Registration and Education. The Department shall determine from reports submitted under the terms of this section and also from the provisions of Section Two (2) of this Act, the character and grade of educational work performed by each and every correspondence school licensed by the terms of this Act. And the Department shall also determine the appropriateness of credits, diplomas, degrees, or other certificates or titles that shall be conferred upon students of correspondence schools licensed under the terms of this Act and the conditions under which issued.

SECTION 10. Any person or persons who solicit, or offer for sale either in person or by letters or circulars any scholarship, degree, diploma, certificate title, or course of instruction to be conferred upon or provided for students of a correspondence school, when such correspondence school has not complied with the terms of this Act, shall be subject to a fine of one hundred dollars (\$100) and a jail sentence of sixty days or both, upon conviction in any court of competent jurisdiction.

SECTION 11. Any officer, employee, stockholder or agent of such correspondence school who may represent that the said school is duly certified when in fact it is not so certified or shall conduct or maintain such correspondence school for correspondence work, when such correspondence school has not been duly licensed, shall be punishable with a fine of not less than five hundred dollars (\$500) or ninety days in jail, or both.

SECTION 12. The attorney-general of the state shall be authorized and required to enforce the provisions of this Act in all actions of Law.

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PART TWO
LYCEUMS AND CHAUTAUQUAS

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CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL LYCEUM

THE lyceum was one of the first channels for the diffusion of learning in the United States. It has left its imprint widely and deeply on American life. The lyceum is fundamentally an outgrowth of early American conditions, but the immediate stimulus to its founding and spread came from the enthusiasm of one man—Josiah Holbrook, of Derby, Connecticut. For a number of years Mr. Holbrook lectured throughout Connecticut and Massachusetts on geology, mineralogy and other natural sciences, informally encouraging small groups to band together for sustained study in the subjects in which they were interested. Then he became sponsor of formal proposals for an organization in every town to study history, art, science and public questions with the aid of libraries and other necessary institutions and equipment. His objects were outlined in one of the Old South Leaflets for 1829 (No. 139) as follows:

1. To improve conversation by introducing worthwhile topics into the daily intercourse of families, neighbors and friends.

2. To elevate the amusements of the community by making the weekly exercises of the Lyceum both instructive and enjoyable.

3. To help young people to save money by keeping them away from "dancing masters, military exercises, etc., which cost more than the yearly Lyceum fee of \$2.00."

4. To call into use neglected libraries and to give occasion for the establishing of new ones.

5. To provide a seminary for teachers.

6. To encourage and assist existing academies.

7. To increase the advantages and raise the character of existing district schools.

8. To compile data for town histories.

9. To make town maps.

10. To make agricultural and geological surveys.

11. To begin a state collection of minerals.

Mr. Holbrook's plan was to have semi-annual meetings of representatives from various town lyceums in each county where "public addresses are delivered and committees appointed to inquire how books, apparatus and instruction by lectures or otherwise can be procured by the several town lyceums; and to learn the state of the schools in the several towns where they are placed, and what measures can be taken to improve them." The counties were then to send representatives to a state meeting for the formation of a State Lyceum which in reality would perform the function of a modern state board of education. "One important

object designed to be affected by a State Lyceum," continues Mr. Holbrook, "is the introduction of a uniform system of books and instruction into our public schools." This state organization was also to foster the "Infant School" and the "Agricultural Seminaries," so that there might be "opportunities for a liberal, a practical and an economical education . . . by the aid of the plow, the hoe, the turning lathe, the plane and the saw."

It was then proposed that delegates from the state lyceums should form a National American Lyceum to serve as a national educational clearing house and also provide "numerous cheap and practical tracts on the sciences, the arts, biography, history, etc., to be circulated to the branch Lyceums, schools, academies, taverns, steamboats and private families," to the end that there might be a "universal diffusion of knowledge." Mr. Holbrook further had in mind the organization of an international lyceum with fifty-two vice-presidents, one from each country, men distinguished in science, public affairs and philanthropy.

A large part of this program was actually put into effect. The first lyceum had been organized in 1826 at Millbury, Massachusetts, known as Millbury Branch No. 1 of the American Lyceum. More than ten neighboring villages followed Millbury's example and in 1827 the Worcester County Lyceum had been organized. By 1828 there were approximately a hundred branches as the result of Mr. Holbrook's personal

efforts while traveling about. Then they spread to other states in the Union. By the end of 1834 there were 3,000 town lyceums spread throughout the country from Boston to Detroit and Maine to Florida. In May, 1831, a meeting was held in New York City for the organization of the National American Lyceum, with delegates present representing 1,000 town lyceums. The new organization immediately adopted as its goal, "the advancement of education, especially in the common schools, and the general diffusion of knowledge." Similar meetings were held in New York annually for eight years. The following list of discussion topics for one of these meetings gives an idea of their nature:

"Ought manual labor colleges to be encouraged, and upon what plan?"

"The most eligible plan of promoting education by legislative enactments."

"What are the greatest desiderata for the improvement of the common schools?"

"On the introduction of natural sciences into common schools."

"On systems of education, with special reference to the promotion of national unity and elevation of character."

"On appropriate branches of female education and the appropriate organization of female schools."

The life of the National Lyceum was short—only eight years, in fact—but its accomplishment lived long

after it. Its effects have been felt in education ever since. It was one of the most powerful agents of propaganda for the establishment of public schools everywhere. The passing of laws providing state taxation for the public schools by the Massachusetts legislature in 1834 and the establishment by Massachusetts in 1837 of the State Board of Education, with Horace Mann as State Superintendent, are traceable in part to the influence of the National Lyceum. The whole educational revival of this decade, indeed, owes much to the institution of the lyceum. And the passing of the National Lyceum is in part attributable to the fact that its work was done.

Although the National Lyceum ceased to exist, the individual town lyceums continued to function. Nowhere, however, were they so active as in New England, where once a week in the towns and villages large numbers gathered in the schoolhouse or tavern hall to hear lectures or debates by the bright young people of the community. Whole families came, the father and mother and the older children. The questions for "high debate" included all the major issues of politics when politics was taken seriously by the American people. In these meeting places of the democracy were formed opinions on education, the tariff, the national bank, the annexation of territory, development of resources and slavery, especially the latter. Here was the laboratory in which was fused the collective opinion which culminated in the tragic conflict of the

succeeding generation. One contemporary observer remarks in connection with the lyceum that the older adolescents were "often more educated by what was going on without than within the schoolrooms," while, at the same time, "the common school of that day was no less a seminary for the entire community than a school for the children."

In 1838 Thomas Wyse, M. P., who came to the United States for a short investigation, on his return to England wrote thus concerning the lyceum system in the Publication of the Central Society of Education, Volume II:

"Thousands of children, of not more than eight or ten years old, know more of geology, mineralogy, botany, statistical facts, etc., in fine, of what concerns their daily and national interests and occupations, than was probably known thirty years ago by any five individuals in the United States."

Somewhat extravagant, of course, but illustrative of the impression the lyceum could make on an observer.

In some parts of the country practically every community had its lyceum. This was especially true of New England. The foremost lyceum in the country was the one in Boston. This was presided over for many years by Daniel Webster. At first home talent alone was relied upon for instruction and entertainment. Later some of the larger lyceums found themselves able to pay traveling expenses for speakers from distant parts and, in some cases, honoraria as well.

With the increase in the number of those who could pay for speakers, there emerged a group of men who gave a part of their time to lecturing as a profession. Some of them were the most distinguished men of their time, and on the early roster of lyceum speakers appear such names as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry D. Thoreau, James Russell Lowell, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Edward Everett Hale; and, later, Henry Ward Beecher, Louis Agassiz, Wendell Phillips, Horace Greeley, Charles A. Dana and George William Curtis.

The lyceum as such ~~practically ceased to exist at the time of the Civil War. There were too many distractions and public sentiment was too overwrought for public discussion of the outstanding moot question of that trying period.~~ But after the war there was formed in the Middle West the Associated Literary Societies, a league of about a hundred literary societies, as some of the surviving lyceums had begun to call themselves. The main object of the new association was the co-operative booking of lectures, thus lessening the fee which any one of the societies would have had to pay. Thirty-five speakers were brought West the first year. In 1870, after three years, the association amalgamated with the American Literary Bureau of New York. Meanwhile, in 1868, there were organized in Boston, under the direction of James Clark Redpath, the Boston Lyceum Musical Bureau, and in 1868 the Williams Lecture and Musical Bureau. The offspring of the lyceum had grown and taken on new form. It

was prosperous. With large bureaus competing for the best speakers, fees mounted; Mark Twain was paid \$300 for one lecture, then Henry Ward Beecher \$500 and even \$1,000. Henry M. Stanley on his return from Africa signed a contract for a hundred lectures for which he was paid \$100,000. Lesser lights and practitioners of other arts, like music, were booked more often, however.

In this wise the informal, serious-minded and spontaneous gathering of villagers at the schoolhouse or tavern has become the prosperous commercial lecture bureau of today. First the local light, then the exchange of local savants between lyceums of neighboring communities, then the payment of small fees and the emergence of the professional lecturer, then the combination of many lyceums or literary societies to engage lecturers jointly and on tour, then the formation of bureaus engaging and booking lecturers as a business.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL CHAUTAUQUA

THE beginning of the Chautauqua movement was touched on in Part I in describing the early history of education by correspondence. Here it should be gone into more thoroughly. If no other claim may be made for Chautauqua it may be said to be truly indigenous to American soil. It is instinct with the spirit of American beginnings, and whatever may be its status now it has been a marked influence in the evolution of American culture.

The Chautauqua goes back to the circuit rider who ministered religiously to the frontier families which had pushed westward from the Atlantic seaboard all through the nineteenth century. The circuit rider's visits were infrequent and usually irregular, and they were made the occasion for the gathering of all the settlers in the vicinity. They took their religion intensively as well as intensely, although sporadically. They settled for days to hear the expounding of the Gospel, bringing their whole families and tents to house them. The religious gatherings came to be called camp meetings. In the more thickly settled regions they were largely attended and more highly organized.

At certain places they were held at stated times every year.

One such place was at Fair Point, New York, on Chautauqua Lake, where a Methodist camp meeting of some importance was held every summer. It has already been told how the Rev. J. H. Vincent and Lewis Miller proposed to the managers of the Chautauqua Camp Meeting Association the establishment of a Sunday School Institute on the camp meeting plan. The proposal was accepted, the first "Sunday School Teachers' Assembly" was held in 1874 and its success was so marked that other denominations joined in the annual meetings. This enlarged the attendance and brought a greater diversity of interests.

At first the Assembly confined its program to the purpose its name implied. Instruction was given only in Sunday School methods and the proper content of Sunday School lessons. Later a natural demand arose for a broader program, since those who came had other interests besides the religious, and even those whose first interest was religion wanted a broader field for study than could be comprehended within the scope of Sunday School methods. At first cognate religious subjects were added, Biblical History, Biblical Geography, Hebrew, etc. As a natural development secular cultural subjects were added still later, History, Music, the natural sciences, classical and modern languages. In a few years the Chautauqua camp meeting had become a full-fledged summer school. In 1874 there was

a session of twelve days, by 1884 this had been lengthened to fifteen days, and by 1894 it was eight weeks. Twenty-five years after the first Assembly more than two hundred courses were being offered in eight academic and twelve special schools, housed in permanent buildings. The summer courses from the beginning branched off into non-resident work carried out throughout the year. The development of the correspondence school division, growing out of the summer course in Hebrew, has already been told in the pages dealing with the correspondence school. There was another phase of education by correspondence, of wider import.

There were many who came to the summer session who did not desire to pursue any specific subject but did want to continue general study under guidance. There was formed in consequence what is still known as the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle. This was composed of small local groups all over the country who read books selected by the Chautauqua directors on suggested plans and met at intervals for discussion and analysis of their reading. The Circle began in 1878 with 7,000 enrolled. It grew fast, and in the first twenty years of its existence 10,000 local groups were formed in the United States and Canada. It is significant that 25% of these were in villages of less than 500 population and 50% in communities of between 500 and 3,500 population. These were communities, it need not be said, where there were no

other cultural agencies or educational agencies except for the young. There were no theaters, no public libraries and no lyceums, for the local lyceum had passed and small communities could not afford to engage lecturers regularly from the lecture bureaus. The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle was their library, forum and lyceum. At the beginning there was no systematized plan. Books were chosen which promised to be interesting and worth while. The first year ten books were assigned, dealing with English history, English literature, Greek history and literature, astronomy, physiology, Biblical history and interpretation. The second year there were thirteen volumes. Subsequently the number of volumes was reduced and in 1886 it was decided to systematize the reading course in a four-year cycle. In the first cycle there were an English year, American year, Greek year and Roman year. This plan has been adhered to, except that other nations, those of modern Europe, have been added. It has been aimed throughout to make the four-year reading cycle a balanced and unified whole. Books chosen are authoritative without being recondite, and they are provided at a low cost. A diploma was given for completion of the course, and it should be noted that half a million persons have enrolled for the reading course since the beginning, a fifth of whom have finished the course and received diplomas.

The Chautauqua also widened its appeal soon after its founding to include those who did not want sys-

tematic studying either during the summer or in the other months. For them it provided semi-popular individual lectures on social problems, religious questions or subjects of contemporary interest. For variety concerts were given occasionally and even sometimes a play. Thus, many were brought within the sphere of Chautauqua who could not be called students.

The Chautauqua prospered and its repute traveled far and wide. It was inevitable that the idea should be adopted by others, with some reason. Facilities for travel were not so easy as now; distance meant more. Few of those with the warmest desire for education could come from distant parts of the country to Western New York. Chautauquas were started elsewhere. None of them has ever had the genuine impulse that gave rise to the institution in New York or the organizing genius that laid its lasting foundations and built on them steadily and solidly. But they started and some flourished. Between 200 and 300 have been organized and operated for short or long periods in the last forty years. Another development accompanied this expansion. To start a permanent chautauqua required initiative, vision and capital. Few communities could command all three. But in the large cities there were numerous individuals who had at least enterprise, capital and an eye for opportunities. They organized traveling or circuit chautauquas, aimed to appeal to small communities which could never hope to have their own. A program was arranged and a route drawn

up, providing a stay of from three days to a week in each community, usually a county seat. And the whole company, lecturers, musicians and performers, were booked and routed like a theatrical company. In this wise the chautauqua became a national institution, although in its most frequent manifestation, as we shall see, there was little in common between the original idea and its usual form except the name.

CHAPTER III

THE MODERN LYCEUM

IT is a far cry from the lyceum of Josiah Holbrook and the earnest New England town to what calls itself a lyceum today. Indeed, little has come down in those hundred years except the name. The lyceum of today is a bureau which sends out popular lecturers or musical teams to small towns several times a year for a fee which yields a profit. It is a booking agency. The towns themselves have no organization. To them a lyceum means the five or six events a year for which tickets will be sold publicly. The town itself has no part except to listen and to pay.

The typical lyceum course consists of five numbers given in the late fall, winter and early spring. These are usually a lecture, one mixed "entertainment," two musical numbers and a drama, or perhaps three musical numbers. The course may be sponsored by a local church or two or more churches in co-operation, a ladies' aid society, public school officials, a group of merchants or a lodge. Their objects may be just the provision of entertainment for the town or the raising of funds for some special cause or their own respective needs. Sometimes their objects are mixed, and the

immediate cause is the persuasiveness of a "sales resistance breaking" lyceum bureau salesman. In any case, there is but a faint trace of any desire to provide educational advantages. And those "numbers" are chosen which promise to be popular enough to yield enough box office receipts to pay the bureau and leave a balance.

One more reason may be cited for the patronage of the lyceum bureaus, perhaps the most important one. This is communal ennui. An analysis of the lyceum's field is enlightening. From fourteen of the most important bureaus in the country there was obtained a list of towns in which their courses are booked. Twelve hundred of these, distributed in 32 states, were taken at random for analysis. This showed that 25% of the lyceum courses are given in villages of 350 population or less, 33½% in villages of 500 or less, 50% in villages of 900 or less, 66⅔% in villages of 1500 or less and 75% in villages of 2250 or less. The lyceum, then, is a village function. The chief reason for it is the lack of anything else. It flourishes in communities where there is no library, no theater, no concert hall, not even a moving picture theater with regular performances; where there is no source of group amusement but the church social and perhaps the ladies' aid society and a lodge, and where there is no educational outlet at all.

The trend of the lyceum business in the last few years is corroborative. A study of the operations of

the larger bureaus over a period of years shows marked fluctuations, responding in the main to conditions in farming communities. Thus, it is now waning. Only one large bureau claims a growth in its volume of business, a few admit that they are standing still and still more that their business is falling off. Unfavorable economic conditions are only a partial explanation. The increase in automobiles, more widespread moving pictures and, perhaps most, the radio are more important factors. These, it is true, are amusements. It remains to examine now in what category the lyceum is to be placed.

The fourteen lyceum bureaus which have already been cited booked 505 different "numbers" for 16,817 engagements in the season 1924-1925. Of these engagements 1,543 or 9.2% were dramatic performances, 3,289 or 19.6% were lectures, 8,418 or 50% were musical offerings of one kind or another and 3,559 or 21.2% were miscellaneous entertainments. And these programs were given to 3,000,000 persons. Since the fourteen bureaus whose figures are given constitute only half the field, a conservative estimate of the total lyceum audience every year is 5,000,000.

These figures are eloquent of the change in the character of the lyceum. The old lyceum was given to solid discourse and serious debate, to concern with matters of science and politics. Now one lyceum offering in five is a lecture, the rest is entertainment. And what are these lectures? The platform that once was

occupied by Emerson, Thoreau, Lowell, Agassiz and Holmes now sounds to what the lyceum profession itself calls the "mother-home-heaven" message. A check of 3,000 lecture titles taken at random showed 53% to be of the category designated as inspirational. One quarter might with charity be called informational and the rest were of a civic or educational nature, also using those adjectives broadly. A small, a very, very small, proportion indicated substance; the rest, even of those called informational or civic, were patently thinned out and sweetened; direct examination of lyceum evenings bears out the indications. The ideal may be described as the Russell H. Conwell classic, "Acres of Diamonds." The lecturers, in the overwhelming majority, are professional speaking troupers, those who can moralize heavily without touching real moral issues, who can philosophize entertainingly, be very deep and yet amusing, who can sound the broad note and always end optimistically. Here are found the political hack, the lame duck officeholder and the misfit clergyman. They "glad-hand" oratorically and collectively. Now and again there is an exception, a celebrity in the public eye who is a drawing card; he is sincere, but his managers see that he eliminates all but the human interest.

The level of the dramatic offerings may be guessed—what could be given profitably to audiences in villages of 1,000 in one-night stands? There is, it is true, some Shakespeare, rather crudely done. What is de-

nominated entertainment is the politer vaudeville, sanitized for the rural church audience—acrobats, jugglers, magicians, cartoonists, elocutionists, trained animals. These incidentally are the lowest paid of all lyceum performers. They have just emerged from the status of amateurs and not yet won their spurs on the professional stage. Music is, as the figures show, the most popular offering of the lyceum. It is also the highest in standard of the offerings. On the whole, the musical programs are on the same level as the ordinary band concerts, sometimes a little better. They include both vocal and instrumental numbers. The following are typical selections: "The End of a Perfect Day," "Annie Laurie," "Love's Old Sweet Song," "On the Road to Mandalay," "Gypsy Love Song," "The Rosary," "One Fine Day" from "Madame Butterfly," "The Sunshine of Your Smile," "Somewhere a Voice Is Calling," "I Hear You Calling Me," "My Heart at Thy Dear Voice," from "Samson and Delilah," Dvorak's "Humoresque," the Pilgrims' Chorus from Tannhäuser, Mendelssohn's "Spring Song," etc., etc. These give their own description. They are not cheap, but they will keep low musical tastes low. The artists are mostly young men and women not good enough to appear professionally or to teach, but it should be added that they are probably the best their audiences have heard or are likely to hear except on the phonograph. Sometimes an artist of recognition may appear, some one like Schumann-Heink, Gadske, Nordica,

but very, very rarely; much more often there will be ukulele sextettes and yodlers. But the average is, as said, the young man or woman not yet able to appear professionally. In short, the popular lyceum is as the popular magazine—it gives the public what the public wants or is conventionally supposed to want, that is, supposed by those who make a profit out of giving it just that. These are, of course, generalizations. They are subject to exception. But on the whole they are justified. The weakness of the modern lyceum is that it is a purely commercial venture. Nothing is even attempted that is not sure to yield a profit, which means that the old, old devices to win popularity are resorted to, the old, old change rung—that hokum, in theatrical slang, is the staple provender.

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CHAPTER IV

THE MODERN CHAUTAUQUA

THE modern chautauqua has two distinct and separate manifestations. The first is the institution on Lake Chautauqua in New York State, from which Chautauquas take their name. The second is the large number of traveling and circuit chautauquas which have pre-empted the name. There are a few chautauquas in the country modeled on the first; that is, they are permanent institutions holding their sessions annually at the same place. But the rest, while called chautauquas, are enterprises of an entirely different order. For this reason, the modern chautauqua will be discussed in separate sections, corresponding to the two different phases.

I

The background of the Chautauqua Institution in New York was given in Chapter II. It has carried on along the lines which were laid down early in its history, except that in 1900 it suspended its correspondence study department—this is not to be confused, however, with the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific

Circle; the correspondence study department conducted courses by correspondence organized like the university extension divisions. The adoption by so many universities of extension by correspondence was one of the factors in the administration's decision to give up correspondence work. The only other important change in the last generation is that the Chautauqua Institution has grown in magnitude and diversity of activity.

The two main divisions of the Institution are the summer school and the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle. The summer session lasts two months and during that period there are between 12,000 and 15,000 persons on the grounds every day. It is a summer community with education as its main business and recreational opportunities to provide for vacation needs. The Chautauqua summer school is as a matter of fact the oldest in the country; its early success inspired the universities to establish summer schools, just as the correspondence study department pointed the way for extension departments.

The school has eighteen departments: English, Modern Languages, Classical Languages, Mathematics, Science, Public School Music, History, Education, Boys' and Girls' Activities, Music, Arts and Crafts, Business Training, Expression, Physical Education, Health and Self-Expression, School for Librarians, Home Economics, Special Subjects. More than two hundred courses are offered in these departments. The

Department of Religious Work is separate and has its own program of classes, institutes and lectures. A course in any of these departments usually consists of five periods a week for six weeks. The lecture method is the basis of instruction. For the purely academic courses the fee is \$8 per semester of three weeks or \$16 for the full summer course. Courses like Music, Arts and Crafts, etc., are usually higher. In addition a gate fee of \$15 is charged for the season, this covering admission fee for lectures, entertainments, etc., during the summer. The fee is reduced to \$10 for those who pay \$30 or more in tuition. Living costs are low, however, and the official catalogue estimates that a summer school student taking, say, three courses may spend the full six weeks' term at Chautauqua at an inclusive cost of \$180, or at most \$220.

Summer school instructors are taken from the faculties of recognized institutions of learning. In the English department for 1926, for instance, were Edwin Mims, head of the Department of English, Vanderbilt University; Oliphant Gibbons, head of the Department of English, Bennett High School, Buffalo, N. Y.; John R. Powell, Principal of Soldan High School, St. Louis, and Edwin Howard Griggs, formerly of the Department of English, University of Chicago. In the Modern Languages department were Lander MacClintock, Associate Professor of Romance Languages, University of Indiana; Mrs. Beatrice S. MacClintock,

Instructor of French and Italian, University of Indiana; J. Horace Nunemaker, Professor of Modern Languages, Denison University; Clifford E. Gates, Associate Professor of Modern Languages, Colgate University; Jose R. Palermo, Instructor in Romance Languages, Ohio State University. Instructors in Mathematics were George R. Raynor, Principal in the public schools, Chautauqua, N. Y., and Mabel Barber, of the Central High School, Akron, Ohio. Science courses were given by S. C. Schmucker, Emeritus Professor of Biological Sciences, State Normal School, West Chester, Pennsylvania, and Dorothy M. Schmucker, Professor in the same institution; D. E. Miller, Vice-Principal of Schenley High School, Pittsburgh; W. G. Burroughs, Professor of Geology and Geography, Berea College, Berea, Kentucky. Professor S. H. Clark of the University of Chicago was head of the Department of Expression. While most of the instructors were taken from high school faculties, they were carefully chosen, and a large proportion came from colleges and universities.

In addition to formal class work there is always a large number of lectures by invited speakers. In 1926, for instance, Dr. Edward Howard Griggs gave a series of five lectures on the masterpieces of Ibsen; Professor Edwin Mims of Vanderbilt University gave a series of five on *The Fight of Idealism in America*; Royal Dixon, formerly of the Field Museum, Chicago, on the human side of plants, animals, birds, insects and water

animals; S. H. Clark a series of recitals from Dickens and Shakespeare and some of the best known living writers and dramatists. Individual addresses were made by Mrs. John D. Sherman, president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and Mrs. Percy V. Pennybacker, former president of the Federation; Mrs. John H. Hammond, President of the Women's Roosevelt Memorial Association; Frederick P. Keppel, president of the Carnegie Corporation; Professor C. E. Gates of Colgate University, Mrs. Ella A. Boole, president of the National Women's Christian Temperance Union, and others. Conferences and symposiums on various subjects are held throughout the season. Occasional plays are presented. Those presented in 1926 were Drinkwater's "Abraham Lincoln," Barry Conners' "Apple Sauce," and Barrie's "The Little Minister." Music also is featured. In 1926 the New York Symphony Orchestra played thirty concerts, with Albert Stoessel as conductor. Finally, there are numerous clubs, with full scope for the play of their special interests. It should be noted also that the New York State Department of Education gives credit for some of the courses offered by Chautauqua.

The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle was described in Chapter II. The system of organizing reading in four-year cycles, with unit subjects for each year, was there outlined. One such cycle may be given:

European Year

World History 1815-1920, by Professor Eduard Fueter,
University of Zurich.

From Tangier to Tripoli, by Frank G. Carpenter.

Eminent Europeans of Today, by Eugene S. Bagger.

Keeping Up with Science, by Dr. E. E. Slosson.

English Year

Queen Victoria, by Lytton Strachey.

The New World of Islam, by Lothrop Stoddard.

The Pacific Triangle, by Sidney Greenbie.

Psychology and the Day's Work.

American Year

A Short History of American Literature, based on the
Cambridge History.

The Tail of the Hemisphere: Chile and Argentina, by
Frank G. Carpenter.

The Party Battles of the Jackson Period, by Claude G.
Bowers.

America Faces the Future, by Durant Drake.

Classical Year

Man's Life on Earth, by Samuel C. Schmucker.

The Life of the Ancient East, by James Baikie.

The Life and Times of Cleopatra, by Arthur Weigall.

The Nature, Practice and History of Art, by H. Van
Buren Magonigle.

The books assigned for reading in 1926-27 were as follows:

150 Years Ago—A Manual for the Sesquicentennial.

The English Speaking Nations, by the Authors of "The Golden Fleece."

Fathers of the Revolution, by Philip Guedalla.

Why We Behave Like Human Beings, by George A. Dorsey.

American and British Literature Since 1890, by Carl and Mark Van Doren.

Christianity and the Race Problem, by J. H. Oldham.

Special editions of these books are issued at reduced rates for the Circle and each set is accompanied by a handbook of 64 pages giving study hints. There is also a question-and-answer service issued monthly to serve as a basis for discussion by groups, and a current topics outline. Examinations are given to those who desire them. Those who have completed a four years' reading course are awarded diplomas. At the present time the number of readers in the Circle is between 9,000 and 10,000 a year.

Such has been the development of what began as a camp meeting and Sunday School Assembly—an educational institution ministering to the needs of millions since its founding, probably the largest summer educational institution in the country.

Other chautauquas which seek to follow the example of the Chautauqua Institution in New York, though without its equipment, organization or scope, are situated at Winona Lake, Indiana; Bay View, Michigan; Lakeside, Ohio, and Boulder, Colorado. There are

others, still smaller. These tend, however, more to emphasis on lectures.

II

All this is far different from chautauqua as most Americans know it. What they know is a traveling or circuit chautauqua, operating in the summer months as a circus. It has a permanent troupe, a route is mapped out during the winter and the company travels from town to town on schedule. In 1904 an enterprising Iowan bethought himself that there were tens of thousands of communities, especially small ones, not so situated as to be able to organize their own chautauquas or to attract enough patronage to make one pay and yet willing to patronize one. He decided to organize chautauquas for them. He started, was successful, and soon had competitors. There are a score or more of bureaus operating such chautauquas or circuits and they serve at least 6,000 communities. As in the case of lyceums, these communities are villages. A check of 1,430 places having chautauquas showed that 25% were villages of 750 population or less, 50% were villages of 1,750 or less, 75% were towns and villages of 6,000 or less. It should be noted that the chautauqua community is larger than the lyceum village, probably because it costs more to bring a chautauqua. And, further, as with the lyceums the chautauqua patronage is falling off, undoubtedly for the same rea-

sons—depression in the agricultural regions and the competition of the automobile, moving picture and radio.

Each chautauqua bureau during the winter arranges a standardized program to be presented in each town without variation and engages the "talent" for the "numbers." Some chautauquas have three-day programs, others have programs as long as a week. During the winter also the chautauqua salesman is out selling the program to the towns. A program costs a town from \$500 to \$2,000, depending on the attractions and the length of program. A committee of influential townspeople usually guarantees a certain sum. At the beginning of the summer the company starts on tour. A chautauqua with, say, a five days' program will have five sets of tents and play in five towns simultaneously. The company is divided into five sections, each staying in a town one day and then moving on, an endless chain thus operating for the whole summer. When the five days' program is over the tent in the first town is struck and jumped ahead by train or motor truck to the sixth town and is ready for the performers when they arrive. Figures obtained from twelve of the biggest chautauqua bureaus showed that they had 209 different sets of equipment and crews in operation and could conduct 175 programs simultaneously. These represent something like half the total number of bureaus of any importance and their figures show an aggregate attendance of 13,650,000 for a summer.

They estimate the number of different individuals attending at 2,400,000. It may be said, then that 5,000,000 persons attend chautauquas every year. It is logical to assume that many of these are the same individuals who attend lyceum programs in the winter.

A typical three-day program of the better sort is the following:

First Day.

2:30 p.m. Lecture—To be announced.

3:30 p.m. Concert—Dunbar Singing Bell Ringers.

8:00 p.m. Concert—Dunbar Singing Bell Ringers.

8:45 p.m. Lecture—"Fads and Extremes," by Dr. George P. Bible.

Second Day.

2:30 p.m. Children's Demonstration by The Jolly Juniors.

3:00 p.m. Concert—Mary Adel Hays Recital Company.

8:00 p.m. Concert—Mary Adel Hays Recital Company.

8:45 p.m. Lecture—"Our Uncrowned Kings," by Arthur W. Evans.

Third Day.

2:30 p.m. "The Builders of Destiny," by Give and Take Company.

3:30 p.m. Junior Chautauqua.

8:00 p.m. Comedy-drama, "Give and Take."

A typical five-day program of the usual run of chautauquas is the following:

First Day.

3:00 p.m. Jack Wood's Male Quartette and Bell Ringers.

8:00 p.m. Jack Wood's Male Quartette and Bell Ringers.

8:45 p.m. Play Reading by Selma Lenbart—"Erstwhile Susan."

Second Day.

3:00 p.m. Sellers-Harper Entertainers.

8:00 p.m. Sellers-Harper Entertainers.

8:45 p.m. Humorous Lecture, by Denton C. Crowl.

Third Day.

3:00 p.m. Lecture—"Americanization," by Bagdasar Baghdigian.

8:00 p.m. Three-act Comedy, "Give and Take."

Fourth Day.

3:00 p.m. Mendelssohn Quartette.

8:00 p.m. Mendelssohn Quartette.

8:45 p.m. Lecture—"Failure of the Misfits," by C. M. Sanford.

Fifth Day.

2:30 p.m. Children's Health Pageant.

3:15 p.m. Baby Harold Chester with the Musical Moores.

8:00 p.m. Baby Harold Chester with the Musical Moores.

8:45 p.m. Cartoonist—Ned Woodman.

In general, what was said of the lyceum programs applies equally to the traveling chautauquas. They consist of music, lectures, and "entertainments"—superior vaudeville, calculated to amuse in conventional ways. The lectures are of the lyceum type—mother-home-heaven. The chautauqua gives the public what it thinks the public wants, and the public takes it, which makes money for the chautauqua and thus

spares the chautauqua any need of conceiving and carrying out a program with more specific gravity. But it is also possible that the public would also be found to want—that is, be willing to pay for—something better. Nobody knows, and certainly the chautauqua makes no effort to find out. Nevertheless, 5,000,000 persons in the United States depend on the chautauqua for mental and imaginative recreation and exercise during the summer, as they do on the lyceum during the winter. Neither can be ignored, no matter what one think of it.

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CHAPTER V

OTHER TYPES OF LYCEUM AND CHAUTAUQUA

THERE are variations from the normal lyceum and chautauqua as already discussed which must be included in a study such as this. There are two in particular—the lecture and cognate services of extension divisions of state universities and the public lectures given under the auspices of boards of education in some of our large cities. These occupy an important enough rôle to warrant detailed examination.

I. *University Lecture Services.* Most of the state universities and some of the privately endowed institutions have what they call a Bureau of Lectures to provide speakers for public gatherings of various kinds. The speakers are generally members of the faculty. The occasions vary as widely as human interests. The early summer is a particularly busy time, for then small colleges, academies and high schools are having their commencements, all of which desire a visiting speaker. Colleges are the first resort for such a speaker, and most of the universities oblige. There are organizations of every sort holding regular or occasional meetings, which may be a luncheon, dinner or

convention, all of which also want a speaker brought from outside. Associations of commerce, trade bodies and the like want technical men or economists. Business men's luncheon clubs want to be informed or amused. Clubs interested in public affairs or current events want the view of authority. Women's clubs, with their multiplicity of interests, want speakers always. All of them appeal to the universities through the Bureaus of Lectures, which suggest the speaker, make the arrangement with him for time and place and conduct the business negotiations entailed. In addition, the Bureaus on their own initiative encourage faculty members to make talks on their field and get them bookings. In some cases this service is very extensive.

II. *University Extension Lyceums.* In some of the universities the Bureau of Lectures goes further. It engages speakers not on the faculty and sometimes concert artists and "entertainers" as well and books them in certain communities much after the fashion of the professional lyceum bureau. The standard of the individual performance is, however, higher than that of the professional lyceum platform. There is less of the inspirational in the lectures and less of the phonograph classic in the musical programs. And, of course, the university lyceum bureau does not operate primarily for profit. Not only need it apply the test to every attraction, "Will it sell?" but it can provide programs more cheaply. The rural community which

gets its lyceum program from a university gets it cheaper as well as better.

In one year the University of Wisconsin offered to the communities of the state a choice from among the following groups for the lyceums: Lectures—20; music—17; dramatic readers and players—10; novelty numbers—7.

The offerings of the University of North Dakota for the year 1925-26 were divided as follows:

Lectures—6; music—9; dramatic readers and players—4; novelty numbers—3.

At the present time, as far as can be ascertained, only four state universities carry on lyceum organizations—Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota and Kansas. The first three are at present working on a co-operative basis, offering the same programs to their respective constituencies. The Universities of Florida and North Carolina are also considering embarking on the same enterprise.

It will be observed in looking over the offerings of Wisconsin and North Dakota that division as between lecture and entertainment is not greatly different from what it is in professional lyceum bureau programs, even though the individual offerings are of higher standard. One of the universities, feeling called upon to explain its excursion into so unconventional a field, makes the following statement in an annual report: "The question frequently arises as to why at least half of a popular course of this sort must be made up

of concert companies and other entertainment programs. . . . The economic side of the work must be always thought of. Such a course without attendance would be of little value. The course must be so balanced in its make up that it will appeal to as many of the people in a community as possible and in this manner assure the success of the course financially without thrusting an undue burden upon any particular group of individuals in the community served."

The extent to which the university lyceum operates may be seen from the following data provided by the University of Wisconsin, the figures showing the number of engagements filled.

| | |
|-----------------|------|
| 1909-10..... | 231 |
| 1910-11..... | 353 |
| 1911-12..... | 421 |
| 1912-13..... | 874 |
| 1913-14..... | 1169 |
| 1914-15..... | 1348 |
| 1915-16..... | 1613 |
| *1916-1918..... | 2138 |
| *1918-1920..... | 1800 |
| *1920-1922..... | 2431 |
| *1922-1924..... | 2060 |

* Biennial figures.

It will be noted that these figures show a marked falling off in recent years. Wisconsin's experience is duplicated at Minnesota and North Dakota, and is the same, it will be remembered, as that of the commercial lyceums. North Dakota offered no courses in 1920-

1925, giving as the reason adverse financial conditions in that period. The head of the Department of Community Service at the University of Minnesota says in a communication under date of April 3, 1925: "During the last three years the demand for lectures in Minnesota has diminished greatly and we furnish only about two lecturers where about two years ago we furnished ten. I believe there are two factors which influence this demand. They are, first the increasing number of college men and women who themselves are able to speak as well as many people who regard themselves as professional lecturers. Local people are, therefore, conducting programs in clubs and providing their own lectures which but a few years ago were provided by the University. The second factor I think is the radio. With a lecture the audience seems to want the message more than anything else and they are getting many messages from radio. The same effect has not been felt on lyceum entertainment companies because with them people seem to have a desire to see the instrument which is being played and to watch the artist manipulate it."

Only one university has ever attempted to conduct a circuit chautauqua and its experience was not encouraging. For two seasons the University of Wisconsin operated a circuit—1916 and 1917. The division of extension was satisfied with the results but found the expense out of proportion to the community benefits conferred and the experiment was abandoned.

III. *Free Public Lectures.* Most American cities with a population of 500,000 or more have a system of free public lectures. These are usually a part of the city's public educational system, either financed and immediately directed by the board of education or indirectly under the board's supervision. The lectures are given either in the auditorium of a school building or in a branch of the city library.

This work varies with individual cities, but it is probably shown at its best in New York City. In one year in New York (1918-19, the last year for which published reports are available) there were 3,639 lectures by 507 different speakers in 126 centers. The aggregate attendance for the year was 644,248, an average per lecture of 177. For some unexplainable reason it has been found by the New York Board of Education that the total annual attendance varies from 400,000 to 1,300,000. The importance of questions holding public attention may have some influence. The lectures are given in the evening, seven times a week from September to April. A classified list of subjects for the year is appended.

| SUBJECT | NO. OF LECTURES |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Literature</i> | 200 |
| General Literature | 128 |
| English Literature | 12 |
| Shakespeare | 39 |
| American Literature | 21 |

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| SUBJECT | No. OF LECTURES |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>History</i> | 374 |
| General History | 53 |
| General Biography | 48 |
| American History | 66 |
| American Biography | 29 |
| World War Topics..... | 129 |
| Reconstruction | 49 |
| <i>Social Subjects</i> | 140 |
| General | 12 |
| Government | 35 |
| Federal Topics | 15 |
| Municipal Topics | 19 |
| Economics | 2 |
| Education | 46 |
| Sociology | 11 |
| <i>Fine Arts</i> | 163 |
| Art | 33 |
| Architecture | 2 |
| Music | 128 |
| <i>Science</i> | 180 |
| General Science | 12 |
| Astronomy | 20 |
| Physics | 20 |
| Geology | 5 |
| Biology | 41 |
| Physiology and Hygiene..... | 35 |
| Industries | 47 |
| <i>Descriptive Geography</i> | 375 |
| General | 1 |
| North America | 18 |

| SUBJECT | No. of LECTURES |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| United States | 79 |
| British North America..... | 21 |
| Central America and West Indies... | 21 |
| South America | 23 |
| Europe | 110 |
| Asia | 57 |
| Africa | 22 |
| Australia and Pacific Islands..... | 23 |

Appended are the schedules for two days, which may be considered typical for the year:

Thursday, March 19, 1925

Problems of Our Adolescent Boys and Girls, Dr. Ira S. Wile.

Racial Strains of Music—the Teutonic Strain, Miss Marie J. Weithan.

The Work and Art of Belgium (Illustrated), Mme. Isabelle Mack.

Concert, with lecture interpretation, Charles D. Isaacson.
Ciò Che L'Arte Fivela (in Italian), Paolo S. Abbate.

Dance Impressions of Life and Art, Eileen Glane (illustrated by interpretative dances).

Book of the Hour—"Twice Thirty," by Edward W. Bok—J. G. Carter Troop.

What Is the Future of Russia? Dr. Arnold Margolis.

Trend of the Times, G. A. Hastings.

Canadian National Parks (Illustrated by moving pictures) F. G. Forster.

Across Sweden by Canal (Illustrated), E. W. Blackman.

The Monuments of Egypt (Illustrated), W. L. Wildey.

Spain, M. L. Jacobs.

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Czecho-Slovakia, J. Heisel.

Poland, Old and New (Illustrated), Mrs. A. von Ende.

Friday, March 20, 1925

Art, Daughter of Industry—Enamels: Enamelled Faience, Ancient Inventors and Artists, Some Definitions (Illustrated), A. Sterling.

Books That Everybody Should Know, J. G. Carter Troop.

Song Recital, M. Ashkinazy.

A Few Memories from "My Thirty Years' Recollections of the Theater," R. M. Hatch.

Dance Impressions of Life and Art, Eileen Glane (illustrated by interpretative dances).

The Mouth, the Gateway to Health, Dr. M. P. Chodos.

The Festivals during the Renaissance Period (in Italian), A. di Lea.

The New Woman of Shakespeare, F. S. Goodfellow.

French Songs from Folk Song to Opera, E. Benson.

A Journey through Songland, M. H. Ford.

Concert, F. T. Molony Studio.

There is a minimum, as will be seen, of the inspirational. There is no cheery boosterism or success prescription. There is an attempt to give information and interpretation. The nearest to the popular are the travel subjects. On some evenings, when the subject lends itself, there is a discussion of the speaker's views by the audience after the address, in effect an open forum. Sometimes this is an invigorating discussion, the benefits of which to the participants and auditors alike are unquestionable. Considering the necessity of making a popular appeal against the multifarious competition of a cosmopolitan city, the standards of these

programs will be conceded to be praiseworthy. Also because it is a large city, the Board of Education has the advantage of being able to command a plentiful supply of competent and well informed speakers at a low fee. The Board now pays only \$10 per lecture, which perhaps is too low, but nevertheless it is able to attract lecturers far superior to those of the lyceum and chautauqua.

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CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

THESE are not far to seek. They rest on the surface of the facts that have been detailed and may be rapidly summed up. The lyceum and chautauqua have contributed materially to the development of American culture. They were at one time its broadest channels, and in places the deepest. But between their historical entity and their present form there is little relation. Even so, they are still of vast importance numerically. They are still the glass through which at least 5,000,000 Americans at the least look at life apart from their immediate material concerns. However one may regard them, they cannot be ignored. And one phase, the Chautauqua Institution in New York, is still a summer school of some educational standing and wide influence.

The level of the ordinary chautauqua and lyceum activities is low, as we have seen. The educational content may be described as a trace. But they do provide entertainment, not very elevating, true, but beguiling to those for whom it is designed. And even if the educational value be slight, we must remember that in most of the communities which resort to the

lyceum and chautauqua the choice is between them and nothing at all. For besides them are only the moving picture, the radio, the phonograph, which are themselves scarcely eclectic. The lyceum and chautauqua have for many years served at least to save the village and township of the American interior from utter boredom. And now that there are the other amusements like the radio and the moving picture the vogue of the chautauqua and lyceum has fallen off.

Any medium which reaches so large a proportion of the population, especially that proportion which is reached by so few other media, could be a valuable medium of adult education. Given the proper auspices, the right personnel and methods carefully thought out, the lyceum and chautauqua could take their place as the most important agencies of mass education. But a thorough reform of both is essential before these conditions can be satisfied, perhaps a complete transformation. For one thing, the bureaus now providing programs, though guided by their desire to command the biggest market at a profitable rate, might experiment a little more in what the public wants. Like the moving picture producers, they have taken it for granted that the taste of the millions called the public is universally and always low, basing their conclusions on the fact that the public is willing to pay for that which is low. It has seldom occurred to any of them to devote the same expendi-

ture of money, energy and "promotion" in pushing attractions of a little better sort. Occasionally they try out something better a little half-heartedly; if it does not rival at once the popularity of the meretricious and sensational they consider their general policy vindicated and return to it, never to deviate again. Yet there is no evidence that the same enthusiasm in trying to "sell" something a little better that is employed in selling the "popular" might not also succeed. The "high-brow" is not in question now. In the mass this or any other people will never go in for the recondite. But there is a large area between high-brow and hokum, fertile but unoccupied.

Concretely, lyceum bureaus must be operated by men themselves of a different calibre. They may be business men, but they should not be showmen first. They must be more discriminating in the selection of attractions and, particularly, of lecturers. The latter must be men of some intellectual and professional dignity and not hacks, as, unfortunately, so many of them now are. They must, first of all, know something and, second, be able to present it. Perhaps there must be a changing personnel. Those who spend their whole lives tramping from platform to platform cannot escape becoming parrots with a few winning tricks. The bureaus, if they have the will, have the power to do much. The machinery exists. There is now an organization known as The International Lyceum and Chautauqua Association, composed of bureau directors,

speakers and entertainers, designed "to bring the individual members of the Lyceum and Chautauqua into closer relationship and to advance the best interests of the Lyceum and Chautauqua work." The association to the present has only 800 members, hardly any staff and no function except the publication of a monthly publication, *The Lyceum Magazine*. If the leading spirits desired to adopt for themselves the standards of a profession they have in this association the machinery.

If considerations of business—which are not wholly improper since the lyceum and chautauqua bureaus are frankly operating as commercial institutions—prevent the bureaus from taking such steps, the field is not monopolized by them. Public educational institutions have already ventured across its borders, with more vision and enterprise and not without success. Free from the importunities of stockholders, they can have some regard for good taste. We have seen that there is a marked difference between the lyceum programs of the state universities and the commercial bureaus, and there is eloquent evidence in the lectures provided by the public school system of New York. The last is possible only in a large and wealthy city, but the state universities, though they, too, have a multitude of claims on their budgets, could do a great deal. The need exists and clamors to be met. Never in any country was there so imperious a demand for an informed public opinion, for a citizenry immunized

against propaganda, fortified with information and enlightened by honest interpretation. The press is not enough. There must be other agencies. If the lecture platform as organized in the lyceum and chautauqua is to be a useful agency to this end, perhaps it can become so only under public auspices. The burden of proof to the contrary rests on the interests now in control of the lyceums and chautauquas.

